

Russia urges Ukraine to ratify START-I

GENEVA (R) — Russia Tuesday called on Ukraine to ratify the START-I nuclear arms reduction treaty with the United States and formalise its non-nuclear status. Grigory Berdennikov, deputy Russian foreign minister, addressed the U.N. disarmament conference as Ukraine's parliament opened a session due to include debate on START-I. "This speech was meant as a message to the Ukrainians," said one Western delegate to the 39-nation forum. "The Russians want to apply pressure." Mr. Berdennikov warned that the July 1991 pact had to be ratified before the START-II treaty, signed last month between Russia and the United States to cut nuclear arsenals by two-thirds, could be implemented. "I cannot but remind of the need for an early ratification of the START-I treaty by Ukraine and Belarus, and for their adherence together with Kazakhstan to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear states," Mr. Berdennikov said. "The START-II treaty is intrinsically related to the START-I and may enter into force and be implemented only in conjunction with the former," the senior Russian official added.

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Iran cancels Kyrgyz visit

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati cancelled a planned visit to Kyrgyzstan to protest against its decision to open an embassy in occupied Jerusalem, Tehran Radio said Tuesday. It said omitting Kyrgyzstan from Mr. Velayati's current central Asian tour "reaffirms our country's anti-Zionist stance and its rejection of the Kyrgyz government's un-Islamic policy." Israel announced last month during a visit to the Jewish state by Kyrgyzstan's President Askar Akayev that the Muslim former Soviet republic would open an embassy in occupied Jerusalem.

Algerian court delays FIS appeal hearing

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's supreme court postponed for two weeks Tuesday a hearing of defence and prosecution appeals against jail sentences imposed on leaders of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), legal sources said. Abassi Madani and his deputy Ali Belhadj were jailed last July for 12 years on charges including attacking state security. Five other FIS leaders were sentenced to up to six years on lesser charges. "It has been put off for two weeks, until Feb. 16, to allow absent (defence) lawyers to prepare their case," one of a group of three defence lawyers said as the court adjourned. The FIS leaders and their lawyers boycotted the July trial, claiming it was political and demanding it be opened to foreign journalists and observers.

Egyptian police hold another 25 suspects

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian police arrested 25 Muslim militants last week on charges of possessing arms and anti-government leaflets, security sources said Tuesday. They said two of the militants were from Cairo and the rest were arrested in Al Fayoum province, southwest of the capital. The sources said about 700 suspects have been detained since the government launched a campaign in December to crush militants seeking to turn Egypt into a strict Islamic state.

OAU calls for Zaïre peace talks

DAKAR (R) — Senegalese President Abdou Diouf, chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), has appealed for rival factions in Zaïre to open peace talks. In a statement published on Monday night, Mr. Diouf said growing violence in Zaïre served neither the interests of Zaïreans nor of Africa as a whole. "That is why, in my capacity as current OAU chairman, I launch an urgent appeal to all Zaïrean political leaders to open a sincere dialogue based on the overriding interests of the Zaïrean nation and people," he said. He did not specify a time or place for talks or say who should attend.

Airbus denies sending team to Iraq

PARIS (R) — European consortium Airbus Industrie Tuesday denied an Iraqi statement that it planned to send a delegation to Baghdad for talks on an aircraft sales contract. "We're not planning for the time being to send a delegation... this report is totally untrue," an Airbus spokeswoman said. The Iraqi news agency (INA) said Friday an Airbus delegation would soon resume talks on a contract signed in 1990 to buy five Airbus A300 for \$500 million. It said the aircraft would start flying once a United Nations ban was lifted.

Kayhan urges new U.S. attitude

NICOSIA (R) — An Iranian newspaper Tuesday urged the United States to end its "hostile" attitude towards Tehran, saying it is missing out on a business bonanza. Kayhan International, putting its own spin on President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's remarks Sunday on prospects of reestablishing relations with the United States, said tensions between Tehran and Washington had to be defused. "Washington is losing a lot for the pursuit of this hostile policy towards Iran," said the English-language paper, quoted by Iran's official news agency IRNA.

Palestinians reject Rabin deal, insist 799 be implemented

Israel cool to rejection of return of 100 expellees; U.S. says no further U.N. step

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINIANS Tuesday spurned Israel's U.S.-backed offer to allow 100 of nearly 400 expelled Palestinians to return from their snowy hillside camp in South Lebanon.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres shrugged off the Arab rejection.

By offering to take back 100 men, shorten the expulsion term of the other 296 to one year and allow them humanitarian aid by helicopter, he secured one of his two goals — to prevent unprecedented U.N. sanctions against Israel.

He said the new Clinton administration promised it would block U.N. moves against its ally.

The other goal of restarting the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace talks still appeared out of reach. The Palestinians refused to return to the negotiating table until all evictees were allowed back.

Mr. Rabin said the deal was worked out with the United States, which had promised to block any attempt to impose sanctions against Israel over the expulsions.

He told a news conference Washington would honour the deal even if the evictees refused to return.

"The United States will prevent any decision that has an impact on the peace process," he said.

(Continued on page 5)

Jordan: Israel trying to circumvent U.N. resolution

AMMAN (J.T.) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber said Tuesday Israel's offer to allow the return of 100 Palestinians from the over 400 expelled to Lebanon seven weeks ago reflects the Jewish state's persistence in challenging the international community and resolutions of international legitimacy.

Dr. Abu Jaber said the decision was an attempt on the part of Israel to get rid of the stalemate it caused for itself and manifests its rejection of an immediate implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which calls for returning the expellees to their homes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"It (the offer) was also an attempt to manipulate the decision through partitioning it, although Israel realises the importance of implementing it immediately and fully," he said.

Jordan Television quoted the foreign minister as calling on the international community to shoulder its responsibilities in not allowing any state to selectively determine its obligations.

The international community should also adopt a unified standard for committing states to implement international resolutions and to counter any attempt to bypass them, he said.

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(Continued on page 5)

Saddam, Arafat meet in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met President Saddam Hussein Tuesday and diplomats said Iraq was looking for a breakthrough to end isolation from the Arab World.

It was the first time that the two leaders have held talks since January, 1992, official sources said.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted the Palestinian leader after his 10-hour trip from Jordan late Monday as calling Iraq's reconstruction and reconciliation efforts a sign of "the greatness of the Iraqi people and their leader."

Mr. Arafat, who was greeted by Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Safah, also praised Iraq's overtures to Washington as "a new page with the new American administration and the other parties."

Iraq has been using the new U.S. administration to try to break out of its isolation after the Gulf war, which destroyed much of its military muscle. Last month Iraq declared a unilateral ceasefire as a goodwill gesture to President Bill Clinton.

The move, which followed renewed U.S. and allied attacks on Iraq after accusations it was breaking ceasefire terms, was accompanied by a call for dialogue.

"This initiative" clears the way for the building up of new relations...," Mr. Arafat said. "It will enable us all as an Arab Nation to face up to the challenges in the new world order."

Diplomats said the visit, the first since the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) public attempts at reconciliation with Saudi Arabia, could be a media attempt by Mr. Arafat to help bring Iraq back into the Arab fold.

"I don't discard the possibility that perhaps he's come with a certain message," said an Arab diplomat.

He added that Mr. Arafat, who recently met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and has good relations with Morocco's King Hassan, could be trying to open the door to mediation efforts.

Kiorg Hassan last year made a tour of the region to try to heal divisions caused by the 1990-1991 Gulf war. Diplomats said it was too soon at the time for real progress and Arab states were

Hamas rejects U.S. tag

By Saleem Al Khaldi
Renter

AMMAN — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) condemned Tuesday a U.S. plan to label it officially as a "terrorist" group, saying it was ready to sit down with the West and explain its aims.

The group, at the centre of the crisis over Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians, said that it sought not to shed innocent blood and that its recent attacks had all been against military targets in the Israeli-occupied territories.

"We are not a terrorist group," Mohammad Nazzari, a Hamas spokesman in Jordan, told Reuters.

"There is no justification to include Hamas amongst organisations sponsoring terrorism. We are an Islamic national liberation group and all international covenants allow us to use legitimate methods to fight the occupation."

The State Department said Monday Hamas was committing "terrorist" acts and would feature in its 1993 "terrorism" report.

"We are ready to enter a complete and full dialogue with the United States," he said.

(Continued on page 3)



View of an Amman street covered with snow Tuesday (Photo by Yusef Al 'Allan)

Dams are near full after snow and rain

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Thanks to the recent rains and snow many of the dams in Jordan are 80 to 90 per cent full; the largest, the King Talal Dam, registered 70 million cubic metres of rain water as of Tuesday afternoon, Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Secretary General Abdul Aziz Wabwah reported.

Dr. Wabwah told the Jordan Times that because the land was relatively dry due to the lack of rain for more than two weeks, not much run-off water reached the dams; but this will be compensated for by the melting snow that fell Tuesday, and there were bound to be floods in some areas.

He said the JVA was going ahead with plans to build more dams in the Jordan Valley to collect rain water for irrigation during the dry season, adding that in the second half of 1993 work was scheduled to start on the construction of the Karameh dam in the central Jordan Valley.

Dr. Wabwah said 19 companies had already submitted bids for the dam which will have a capacity of 55 million cubic metres of water. He said the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) will offer the JVA a loan for the project.

The snowfall will continue intermittently Wednesday, according to the Department of Meteorology, which said that the force of the storm was diminishing as the depression that was centred over Cyprus had moved towards eastern Syria and northern Iraq.

A department spokesman said snow will continue to fall intermittently on regions rising above 800 metres above sea level, with night temperatures remaining around -1°C and rising to no more than 2°C during the day.

The forecast for Thursday and Friday, the spokesman said, is more or less rainy and snowy with similar temperatures.

A slight improvement in the weather could occur on Thursday and Friday, although it will remain partly cloudy to cloudy, the spokesman added.

The snow Tuesday forced the Ministry of Education to close schools, community colleges and universities.

The weather also prompted Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arafat to announce the postponement of Wednesday's session until Sunday.

Peace talks falter amid new Somali clashes

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — The start of preliminary peace talks among Somalia's warring factions was delayed Tuesday by a new outbreak of fighting near the southern port of Kismayu.

In the latest incident, a U.S. helicopter gunship Monday fired on a Somali vehicle that military officials said was advancing on the southern port of Kismayu, where clans continue to fight.

Nine Somalis were reported killed in the fighting, including two found in the destroyed vehicle, said Marine Chief Warrant Officer Virginia Bueno.

The developments came as U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said he and U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali agreed it was time for a United Nations force to replace the Americans in Somalia.

The Somali factions' talks were to have begun in Mogadishu Monday but were delayed by objections from General Mohamed Farrah Aidede, one of the country's principal warlords, a U.N. spokesman said.

The spokesman, Farouk Mawlawi, said a Gen. Aidede asked for a suspension because of what he called continued ceasefire violations by a rival, Mohammad Said Hersi.

Gen. Hersi, better known as Gen. Morgan, is a son-in-law of ousted dictator Mohammad Siad Barre. He continued to wage war in the south and west of the country after the ousted president fled into exile two years ago.

U.S. and Belgian troops found the bodies of 15 Somalis after fishing out militia fighters from a village near Kismayu port Monday, a defence ministry spokesman said in Brussels.

"Some of the bodies had clearly been executed (in clan warfare)," the spokesman said Tuesday. The raid on Beer Xany, northeast of Kismayu, was mounted Monday to sweep the area clean of fighters belonging to the militia led by Gen. Morgan.

The defence spokesman said the deaths appeared to be a result of fighting Sunday between Gen. Morgan and the rival clan of Omar Jess.

Four Somalis were wounded in the clash and were being treated in Kismayu, he said. There had been no losses among Belgian and U.S. soldiers.

Nearly 500 U.S. Marines left for home Monday, flying out of an airport hit by sniper fire only an hour before the departure. The 473 Marines were the first of some 2,700 American troops to be withdrawn this week.

All those departing are support and logistic personnel whose jobs were either eliminated or turned over by the Marines to the U.S. army.

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Government seen trying to minimise damage from law segregating sexes

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Either because it was caught unawares or was unwilling to put up a fight with the ultra-conservative groups, the centre government of Prime Minister Sharif Zaid Ben Shaker last week had to accept yet another edict from parliament restricting its freedom of movement in the application of the law. Last time it was the banning of alcohol, then investing the savings of the Martyrs Fund in accordance with Islamic sharia. And this time it was a draft law segregating sexes at sports centres and physical fitness facilities, including swimming pools.

Following the incorporation of the controversial clause in a draft law on youth welfare, the government is trying to put up a brave face by arguing that the law is primarily aimed at regulating the status of "commercial establishments" which offer sports and physical fitness facilities rather than separating men and women frequenting such centres.

"Hotels and social clubs registered with the Ministry of Youth will not be affected by the law," said Minister of Youth Saleh Irsheidat. "Some of the social clubs have ministry approval dating back to 20 or 30 years."

"But there are over 260 sports and fitness centres in Jordan which are not licensed by the Ministry of Youth and the draft law specifically targets them," the minister told the Jordan Times in an interview.

The minister argued that the "social clubs are social and cultural institutions with a general assembly and an administrative body unlike the one-man or two-man shows like the commercial establishments

which solely serve the purpose of making money for their owners."

Notwithstanding the argument, experts say that a close reading of the language of the law indicates that all establishments could be affected if the government chooses to do so. Social clubs are given a one-time approval and do not require annual renewal of licences as commercial establishments do, but the government could demand that they impose segregation.

By and large, most of the "commercial sports centres" — such as martial arts schools and physical fitness facilities — have separate timings and facilities for men and women, but are not being very strict about enforcing segregation, preferring to leave it to individuals to make their choice.

Officials of social clubs registered with the ministry said they did not expect to be affected by the law.

"As things stand today, I don't think the law is applicable to us," said Derek Ledger, general manager of the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ), which follows a liberal policy. "Anyway we have to see how (the government) chooses to implement the law."

Adnan Naghwi, president of the Al Ahli Club — one of the oldest in Jordan — said he was not approached by the authorities for consultations over the planned legislation. But, he said, Al Ahli does not expect itself to be included in the new measure.

"In any event," he said, "Al Ahli has a mostly family kind of membership and it offers such an atmosphere where segregation of men and women does not come into the picture."

The original text of the draft law on youth welfare as presented to the House by the government was aimed at empowering the Ministry of Youth to take charge of the legal status of commercial sports centres and facilities. It made no mention of segregating sexes as a condition for licensing "commercial establishments" which offer health and sports facilities.

But the Brotherhood bloc, attending the House session in strength, managed to incorporate the additional provision that licences for such establishments were contingent on segregation of sexes.

The Brotherhood move came against the recommendation of the House's Judiciary Committee that an entire article which said the Ministry of Youth would be in charge of licensing commercial "recreational and sports centres, including swimming pools and life guards" be deleted from the draft law.

The House voted 34 against 19 to retain the article in the law along with the Brotherhood-proposed incorporation.

"The government was taken by surprise and found itself left with the fait accompli," said a parliamentary observer. "Instead of achieving its original objective, it was left with a law that looked like taking the country back several decades."

"No doubt the government is now trying to minimise the damage," said the observer.

There are expectations that the draft law could undergo trimmings and the controversial segregation clause could be eliminated by the

Upper House of Parliament. If the Upper House does so and insists on its stand, then a joint session of the two chambers would have to vote on the law.

When and if the draft legislation is enacted, it will become obligatory for new applicants as well as the already operating establishments to segregate sexes as a precondition for securing a licence or renewing old ones.

"We already have separate timings and classes for girls and boys," said Mohammad Asaf of Fares Tae-kwon-doo Centre on University Road.

"There are exceptional cases when some girls might want to train with boys of advanced levels," said Mr. Asaf. "In such cases we ask for the family's approval."

A four-year-old "work-out centre" in Shmeisani said it maintains separate timings for the two sexes, but some of its clients mix freely, having chosen on their own to switch timings.

"In fact our registration says

(Continued on page 5)

Oil firms 'lining up' for deals with Iraq

By Jane Araf

Reuter
BAGHDAD — Oil companies from the United States, Europe and Asia are lining up for what promises to be a post-sanctions oil boom in Iraq, diplomats say.

"It is clear that some American, French, Italian and Japanese companies are conducting talks with Iraq for large-scale agreements to explore for oil in the south," a European envoy told Reuters.

The firms were generally believed to be negotiating generous production-sharing accords to take effect after U.N. trade sanctions are lifted.

French oil companies have made no secret of their talks.

But the involvement of American companies, whose government has spearheaded the drive to keep Iraq off world markets in line with United Nations trade sanctions, is more sensitive.

Washington has gone further than the U.N. sanctions in essentially banning its citizens from discussing business deals or travelling to Iraq on non-humanitarian missions.

Diplomats did not have details of the companies involved but one said the U.S. firms were believed to include major multinational companies which operated in Iraq before its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The U.S. oil company talks generally appeared to be conducted in Baghdad and Amman with Arab-Americans acting on behalf of the firms, the envoy said.

He said foreign companies generally were negotiating or had signed framework agreements giving them between 35 per cent and 50 per cent of production over periods of eight to 10 years.

The start dates have been left open.

"The Iraqis are eager to show that there is interest among the coalition members in doing business with them," said another European envoy.

Production-sharing deals would be particularly attractive for France, which before the Gulf war imported more than 30 per cent of its oil from Iraq, diplomats said.

Diplomats had no indications that oil firms were donating food and medicine to Iraq to sweeten future contracts as published reports have suggested but did not rule this out.

Iraq's official media last week quoted Oil Minister Usama Al Hiti as saying foreign firms were lining up to buy Iraqi oil.

The black market value of the Iraqi dinar rose to 34 to the dollar from 38 on the news, businessmen said.

The currency is officially pegged at one for \$3, a rate Baghdad says it will attain once its oil exports flow again.

Mr. Hiti has said Iraq is now prepared to produce three million barrels of crude daily and could double that by the year 2000.

Iraq, OPEC's second biggest oil producer before the U.N. imposed a sweeping trade ban soon after it invaded Kuwait in August 1990, has among the world's biggest reserves in its southern fields.

The government, holding out for a better deal, has so far rejected U.N. proposals for selling limited amounts of oil under supervision.

It now exports only to Jordan in repayment of debt and limited quantities of fuel are smuggled to Turkey.

Analysts say it has rebuilt its damaged oil sector to the point where it could quickly resume large-scale exports.

Israel says friction with EC resolved

BRUSSELS (Agencies) — Israel said Tuesday it had agreed with the European Community (EC) to continue talks on closer trade ties, following its decision to allow some expelled Palestinians to return home.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres also told reporters his country, at a dinner meeting with EC foreign ministers in Brussels late Monday, had dropped objections on how community aid was provided to the Israeli-occupied territories.

But it was not immediately clear how the Palestinian rejection of the Israeli offer to the evictees would affect EC-Israel relations.

These had looked shaky until Israel, under mounting international pressure, announced late Monday that it would allow some of the Palestinians it expelled six weeks ago to return.

"The ministers have expressed their readiness about continuing negotiations with Israel," Mr. Peres said. The next round of talks would take place on March 2.

The EC ministers described the Israeli decision to take back some of the Palestinian expellees as a helpful step in relations between Israel and the EC.

"I find this information a very good sign. I find it very helpful," Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen, who chaired the meeting as the current president of the EC, told reporters after the meeting.

Mr. Peres said the community's firm opposition to the expulsions had played a role in Israel's decision to modify its position.

Earlier, he told the EC ministers: "We do...aspire to an enhanced relationship and a deeper level of substantive cooperation."

EC External Relations Commissioner Hans van den Broek told reporters that it was true Israel had not bowed to U.N. demands that all the evictees should be allowed to return immediately.

But he added: "Israel has nevertheless opened the door to a solution and that is important. It is a helpful step."

Mr. Peres said Israel had dropped its objection to the EC sending financial, health and food aid directly to the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The issue has caused friction for some time, with the EC insisting that it should be able to act independently.

"Now we say 'do it as you want.' We shall help and support," Mr. Peres said.

The EC ministers had said they would still follow the issue of the evictees, Mr. Peres said, but they had agreed to continue talks on updating a 1975 EC-Israel trade accord.

"The link (between the two issues) was unlinked," Mr. Peres said. Israel is seeking much closer ties, including freedom of movement in capital and services and greater cooperation in the fields of science and technology.

"We don't ask for privileges. We ask for equality," Mr. Peres said. "We want to find our place."

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BATTLE AGAINST DRUGS: A worker from the Pakistani Narcotic Control Bureau pours petrol over confiscated drugs before they are destroyed. Tens of tonnes of drugs seized during a series of raids were set on fire. Pakistan, believed to be a major transit point for drugs, is under international pressure to curb the thriving trade. (AFP photo)

Sudan to give aid agencies better access

GENEVA (AP) — The Sudanese government has promised to give aid organisations better access to victims of famine and disease in the war-ravaged south of the country, a United Nations official said Monday.

Charles Lamunier, head of the U.N.'s Humanitarian Affairs Department in Geneva, said the accord should enable vital relief to reach millions of people displaced by the long civil war.

But he said it was not yet certain whether the government would live up to its pledges.

"We have now the elements for an improved presence in Sudan and it's up to us to ensure that this doesn't become another piece of paper floating around," Mr. Lamunier told a news conference.

The agreement was signed after a four-day meeting in Khartoum last week between Sudan's Islamic military government, U.N. officials and key non-governmental organisations.

It provides for greater cooperation between international relief agencies and Sudanese organisations, more hiring of local staff, and the use of aid for rehabilitation

programmes in all parts of the country as well as emergency relief in the south.

There is a working committee of government officials and aid representatives to try to implement the accord.

U.N. agencies are present in some parts of southern Sudan, which is in the grips of a 10-year-old civil war. However, after growing tensions, the government forced all but a handful of private relief organisations to pull out from the south last year.

It is feared that there are pockets of starvation in southern Sudan — an area the size of France — even worse than in neighbouring Somalia.

And there is growing concern about the spread of a parasitic disease called kala-azar. The group Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) estimates that up to 60,000 people have died of the disease, spread by sand flies. The World Health Organisation has warned that 400,000 people in the western Upper Nile region may be at risk. The government has disputed the figures and said there is no evidence of an epidemic.

The fighting and war-induced famine has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced more than six million people from their homes. It is feared that up to one million people may be at risk of starvation.

Fighting resulting from the break-up of the rebel group in the Christian-dominated south has complicated the work of aid agencies still further.

The terms of last week's accord would enable government workers to team up with international relief officials to check on worst affected areas and would allow for the resumption of specific programmes.

Mr. Lamunier said there seemed to be a "genuine desire" on the part of the government to improve relations with aid organisations and donor governments and ease away from its isolation from the West.

He said the government apparently signed the deal because it feared it had passed the "point of no-return," with already scarce aid funds threatened further.

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Iran celebrates the revolution that never quite ended

By Neil MacFarquhar

The Associated Press
TEHRAN — Tens of thousands of Iranians converged on the tomb of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini Monday to mark his return 14 years ago for the final push against the Shah.

Ayatollah Khomeini's stature as an imam continues to grow. Nearly four years after his death he remains the central figure in celebrations culminating in the official anniversary of the Islamic revolution on Feb. 11.

But his heirs grapple with deep-rooted economic problems that have left much of the country's 60 million population worn out from the daily struggle to make ends meet.

"The fact is that with every revolution the first day you see great enthusiasm, but it gradually dissipates," said Mortaza Firooz, editor-in-chief of the English daily Tehran Times.

"Our revolution has entered a phase where we want to create order. The people want the economic situation to improve," he said.

Iran's basic blueprint has been to try to preserve the cultural guidelines Ayatollah Khomeini established while eliminating most of the state control that came with the revolution.

By attracting cash from abroad, especially billions owned by Iranian entrepreneurs and industrialists who fled with the Shah in 1979, the government of President Hashemi Rafsanjani hopes to rebuild manufacturing plants and the military decayed by the neglect and the 1980-88 war with Iraq.

"Rafsanjani must create enough security and confidence in Iranians so they can bring back assets and invest here," said Raja'i Khorassani, a member of parliament and former U.N. ambassador.

Overseas, Iran wants to lead an independent Islamic bloc. Tehran denies frequent charges by Washington and others that it seeks to export fundamentalism and develop a massive arsenal, including nuclear weapons, to achieve that end.

"We believe the West ought to respect Islamic public opinion and leave Muslims to themselves to choose their destiny on the basis of their own convictions," Mr. Rafsanjani said Sunday in his first international news conference in two years.

"They cannot go on suppressing Muslim people forever. They may be able to postpone events, delay certain events, but the more they are delayed, the more explosive they will become," he said.

Iran emerged from the Gulf war that followed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in a strong position. Its Arab neighbours and their Western protectors were grateful that Tehran had not done anything to wreck the offensive against Baghdad.

But that went up in smoke over a series of problems ranging from territorial disputes to raising the bounty for killing British writer Salman Rushdie, condemned by Ayatollah Khomeini for blasphemous Islam. Iran says the West constantly generates new excuses to try to punish it.

Mr. Rafsanjani said he saw little hope for an early resumption of ties with the United States, severed after militants seized 52 hostages in the U.S. embassy in November 1979

and held them for 444 days. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who inherited Ayatollah Khomeini's mantle as the country's overall spiritual and political leader, has also ruled out such ties. Since his opinions are virtually religious law, they cannot be directly challenged.

"If someone speaks of rapprochement he is accused of treachery," said Mr. Khorassani, the ex-U.N. envoy.

Iranians and Western diplomats dismiss speculation that a rift between Ayatollah Khamenei and Mr. Rafsanjani on this and other issues is causing gridlock.

"The architects of the revolution are unlikely to have a real fight. If one goes the other will go," said one prominent journalist, asking that his name not be used because he also works for the government.

Analysts here said outsiders were too quick to assume that by engineering the more radical ejection out of parliament in the April elections, Mr. Rafsanjani was ushering in a more liberal era.

The radicals have disappeared from public view, but continue needling the government through their newspaper Salam.

Many Iranians say its irreverent attacks on everything from unrealistic oil price projections in the budget to the sorry state of domestic air travel has made it one of the best reads in town.

Second, riots over housing shortages erupted in a number of Iranian cities. Since the current leaders organised the riots that toppled the Shah, they were quick to crack down.

Third, Iran overextended itself in buying imports and has not attracted the kind of investments that generate cash. Its budget deficit for the year that ends in March is projected at \$14 billion. European and Japanese bankers have started capping credit for Iran due to delays in repaying an estimated \$30 billion in short-term debt.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Yael Dayan attacked by own party

TEL AVIV (AP) — Legislator Yael Dayan came under attack by fellow members of the centre-left Labour Party Monday for her meeting with Yasser Arafat last week, radio reports said. Ms. Dayan was the first lawmaker and second Israeli to visit Mr. Arafat in Tunis after parliament last month cancelled a law banning contacts with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials. Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan met Mr. Arafat just after the law was dropped. The 51-year-old Ms. Dayan, a writer and the daughter of the late Israeli defence minister Moshe Dayan, and has fostered links with Palestinians both in the occupied territories and abroad. Legislator Avigdor Kahalon accused Ms. Dayan of hurting the Labour-led government, and lawmaker Eli Ben-Menachem said that "perhaps the time has come for her to leave the Labour Party," according to the reports. Ms. Dayan told army radio that though there were "really harsh things" said in a meeting of parliament's Labour faction, these also were expressions of support. The radio said Ms. Dayan was supported only by Yossi Beilin and Avraham Burg, legislators in the party's dovish wing. Ms. Dayan added on the radio that she was experienced at being attacked by people who apparently feel the need to attack something new.

Russians protest at U.S. embassy in support of Iraq

MOSCOW (AP) — Several dozen Russian hardliners held a vigil Monday near the U.S. embassy to protest U.S. policies in Iraq and the former Yugoslavia. There were mostly elderly men and women in the crowd of about 50 people, supporters of Russia's nationalist and conservative National Salvation Front. Police ordered the demonstrators to stand on a side street next to the embassy in downtown Moscow. The protesters raised placards that read, "Hands off Iraq," and accused the United States of being "the empire of evil." Other placards stated support for Serbia. No violence or arrests were reported during the demonstration. Russian hardliners have accused the government of abandoning Iraq, a traditional ally of the former Soviet Union, and "brotherly Slavs" in Serbia, or the sake of friendship with the United States. They have demanded that Russia take diplomatic action to stop U.S. air raids on Iraq and cancel U.N. sanctions against the former Yugoslavia.

Bonn denies diplomats backed 'spy' in Iran

BONN (R) — The Bonn foreign ministry denied Monday that a German sentenced to death by an Iranian court had the support of German diplomats to spy for Iraq. A Tehran newspaper said engineer Helmut Szimkus spied for Iraq with the knowledge and approval of German diplomats. Asked if Bonn's diplomats had been involved in any way, foreign ministry spokesman Hans-Joachim Lauth said: "This I deny categorically." Tehran's Salam newspaper said Mr. Szimkus was recruited by an Iraqi intelligence officer in 1985-86 and the information he sent to Iraq in return for cash helped the Iraqi army in its air and missile attacks during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. The report alleged that Mr. Szimkus met a Saudi diplomat and a United Arab Emirates diplomat in Tehran before leaving Iran at the end of the first of two spying stints. It was the first detailed account of the case in Iran's media since newspapers quoting Iran's prosecutor-general last week said a German had been sentenced to death for spying for Iraq.

Ramadan in Algeria with message from Saddam

ALGIERS (R) — Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan is visiting Algeria with a message from President Saddam Hussein for Head of State Ali Kafi, official media said. The message dealt with bilateral relations and the situation in the Arab world, Algerian Radio said. Mr. Ramadan was welcomed at Algiers airport Monday by Redha Malek, member of Algeria's collective presidency. He said that during his two-day visit he would also meet Prime Minister Belaid Abdul Salam, the official news agency AFS reported. Algeria's leaders last month criticised allied air raids on Iraq, mounted to persuade Baghdad to comply with U.N. resolutions, and called for dialogue to replace confrontation.

Moroccan socialists quit election body

RABAT (R) — Morocco's socialist opposition party has withdrawn from a national commission set up to control parliamentary elections in April, a party leader said Monday. The Socialist Union of People's Forces (USFP) suspended its participation indefinitely because of human rights violations, said its secretary, Mohammed Al Yazghi. The move follows an appeal court decision Thursday to uphold a two-year jail sentence on an outspoken union leader allied to the USFP. The unionist, Noubar Al Amaoui, was convicted by a lower court last April of making insulting and libellous remarks about the authorities in an interview with the Spanish daily El Pais. The USFP called the appeal court's decision inequitable, scandalous and a violation of freedom of expression. "The authorities have created an atmosphere of tension when debate is required," Mr. Al Yazghi said. Several other people had been jailed for expressing their opinions, he said.

Cyprus believes it holding French murder suspect

NICOSIA (R) — Cyprus police said Tuesday they had detained a man believed to be Charles Altieri, sentenced in absentia for the murder of a French judge 12 years ago. A police spokesman said they were questioning a man travelling on a Belgian passport to determine whether he is Altieri, sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Judge Pierre Michel in Marseilles in October, 1981. "Acting on information from Interpol, Belgian passport holder Yves Dominique Pettens was arrested at Larnaca airport on his arrival from Dubai Monday," a police spokesman said. "We believe he is Charles Altieri, a French citizen wanted by the French authorities in connection with the murder of French Judge Pierre Michel," the spokesman added. "If it is proven that the man under arrest is Altieri, we will begin the procedure to extradite him to France." Altieri, who had a long criminal record, disappeared after escaping from a Swiss prison where he was serving a term for drugs trafficking, after which he was said to be extradited to France. A court which sentenced Altieri in absentia heard that he was the driver of a motorcycle whose pillion rider fired the shots which killed the judge.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 52 Ser La Une
19:00 News in French
19:15 Varieties
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Saved by the Bell
21:00 One step ahead
21:30 Classic cars
22:00 News in English
22:30 Bodyline

PRAYER TIMES

05:05 Fajr
06:24 (Sunrise) Duha
14:45 Dhuhur
16:45 'Asr
17:14 Maghrib
18:33 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Assumption Tel. 67440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terresanta Church Tel. 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775361

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771731

Armenian International Church Tel. 683326

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 823624, 654932

Church of the Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cold, cloudy and rainy, with snow falling at times on areas with an elevation of more than 800 metres above sea level. Winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy with expected scattered showers of rain, while winds will be southerly fresh and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 1/2
Aqaba 8/14
Deserts 1/5
Jordan Valley 7/11

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 3, Aqaba 14. Humidity readings: Amman 99 per cent, Aqaba 56 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 09:00 Aden (RJ) | 22:05 Sanaa (RJ) |
| 09:25 Larnaca (RJ) | |
| 10:35 London (RJ) | |
| 10:45 Frankfurt (RJ) | |
| 10:55 Istanbul (RJ) | |
| 11:05 New York, Amsterdam (RJ) | |
| 11:30 Brussels, Paris (RJ) | |
| 11:40 Madrid, Geneva (RJ) | |
| 11:45 Rome (RJ) | |
| 12:45 Damascus (RJ) | |
| 13:00 Dubai (AZ) | |
| 13:05 Karachi (PJ) | |
| 13:25 Cairo (MS) | |
| 13:35 Jeddah (SU) | |
| 13:40 Sanaa (YJ) | |
| 13:45 Damascus (PJ) | |
| 13:50 Paris, Damascus (AF) | |
| 13:55 Vienna, Larnaca (OS) | |
| 14:00 Beirut (ME) | |
| 14:05 Dubai (AZ) | |
| 14:10 Karachi (PJ) | |
| 14:15 Cairo (MS) | |
| 14:20 Jeddah (SU) | |
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| 14:30 Damascus (PJ) | |
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| 17:20 Jeddah (SU) | |
| 17:25 Sanaa (YJ) | |

RJ privatisation to take off soon

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Plans to privatise Royal Jordanian, the national carrier, will be airborne in the first half of February with an international consultancy firm awarded a contract to study the status of the airline and draw up a definite course towards privatisation.

Official sources said a government committee in charge of preparing the ground for converting the wholly state-owned airline into a private sector entity has shortlisted six consultancy firms to carry out the study and a final decision on awarding the contract is expected to be taken soon.

"The contract should be awarded before mid-February," said an official source. The source declined to name the aspirants for the contract or give further details.

But Royal Jordanian as well as other sources have said that preference would be given to international companies with proven records in direct involvement in running airlines.

"What we need is an international institution which knows the airline business from the inside, from actual first-hand experience in operating an international carrier," said a senior official.

Essentially, the study will be "a complete, in-depth evaluation and assessment of the airline's status, including all aspects of operations and administration."

added the official, who preferred anonymity.

Mahmoud Balqez, president and chief executive officer of the airline, told a meeting of sales and marketing managers late last year that the main objective of privatisation was to get out of the lingering problems of indebtedness and under-capitalisation.

"One of the reasons for privatisation of the airline is the generation of enough cash and a comfortable working capital vis-a-vis its presently acute under-capitalisation while we debate how best to meet out past obligations and restart with a fairly clean slate," Mr. Balqez said.

In the late 1980s, the airline found itself facing the reality of accumulated debts of over JD 250 million and sought government help.

But the requests were rejected by successive governments, which told the airline not to expect the treasury to bail it out and to find its own means to correct its situation.

However, the government did step in, indirectly and directly, to help the airline when the crisis appeared to get out of hand, but declined to inject any large amount of cash.

When it became clear that RJ helping itself out of its difficulties was nearly impossible, the government was compelled to take up the issue of privatisation and form a committee to supervise the process.

The committee is chaired by



Mahmoud Jamal Balqez

Deputy Prime Minister and Transport Minister Ali Suheimat and includes several other senior officials as well as the chief executive officer of the airline.

While the ultimate shape of the privatised entity will depend largely on the planned study and recommendations, the government believes that Jordan and Jordanians should retain a controlling interest in the airline regardless of every other consideration, officials say.

The first step would be to convert the state enterprises into an entity owned partly by government and partly by various government-controlled agencies and institutions such as the Jordan Petroleum Refining Com-

pany, the Housing Bank and the Social Security Corporation — which are among the major local creditors of the airline.

"The general idea in the first phase is to offer these institutions shares in lieu of debts owed to them," said an official. "The shares will not be transferable unless with the explicit permission of the government."

The second phase involves privatisation in its full sense. The shares held by the local institutions will be transferred to others as long as the total volume of shares in the hands of foreign interests does not exceed 49 per cent.

The privatisation process will be implemented largely in line with a report submitted by Arthur Anderson, the international auditing company which studied the books and status of Royal Jordanian and suggested several remedial solutions.

The actual steps in the process will be guided by the findings and recommendations of the planned study.

The Arthur Anderson assessment said the operational strategy of RJ was sound, but the airline had a cash flow problem. It suggested a capital increase to at least \$100 million and cautioned against any large-scale fleet commitment.

RJ, which used to be known as Alia before it underwent a re-vamping in the late 1980s, had made a remarkable recovery from the blow suffered during the

Gulf crisis when it incurred a loss of about \$100 million in extra insurance and lost revenues.

There is no dispute in government circles and industry sources that the airline is a reasonably profitable organisation.

Tourist traffic has largely picked up and improved since the Gulf war of 1991, and RJ has not only regained its operational profits but also steadily improved revenues at a time when the world aviation sector was going through a phase of depression.

In fact the airline staff got a pay raise of 15 per cent in 1993.

"One would think that RJ should have gone out of business in the last two years, what with the plunge that world travel took," said a senior official of a foreign airline operating out of Amman.

"Obviously the reins were tight at RJ and it was indeed with the most careful approach that the airline managed not only to stay afloat but also avert pitfalls," said the official.

The operational profits of RJ in 1992 were estimated at more than JD 30 million, part of it achieved through reduced spending. But at a time of stiff competition and cut-throat prices in the aviation business, reduced spending may leave its negative impact on long-term business interests, experts say.

Despite its good operational track record, officials say, the burden of debts is not only wiping out the profits but also pushing the airline further into the red.

Baathists deny organic links with Iraq

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ahmad Najdawi, the secretary general of the Jordan Baath Socialist Party, has denied any contention that his party was subordinate to its Iraqi counterpart or received orders from it.

"The Jordanian Baath party is not dependent in any way on the Iraqi (counterpart) and does not receive financial assistance from (any) foreign source," Mr. Najdawi said at a lecture held at the Islamic Studies and Research Centre Sunday. "But that does not mean that there is no coordination."

Mr. Najdawi, whose party was initially denied recognition by the Ministry of Interior last fall, his party was older than the Iraqi chapter claimed and that it was impossible to receive any orders from it.

"While both rely on the same ideology, each takes a course that befits its objectives and circumstances," he said.

Together with three left-wing parties, the Baath Party was refused legal status in December by the Ministry of Interior. The party was legalised on Jan. 19 only

after it provided the ministry with assurances of its independence.

He said that the press and public opinion have contributed a lot towards the party's recognition because the ministry's justification of its action was not fully convincing.

"We have not made any concessions or bargains to get the licence; but we agreed to add 'Jordanian' to the party's name and assured the ministry that there will be files of all the party's sympathisers."

He said that the memorandum which his party submitted to the Ministry had reaffirmed the party's belief in the message of Islam and its opposition to atheism, that it believed in Arab unity and was working for its realisation.

"The party's history reflects its struggle towards achieving this objective through the sacrifices its members have made to achieve liberty, progress and social justice," Mr. Najdawi said.

Mr. Najdawi said that the party's principles were to Constitution and the National Charter, and are consistent with those of the Great Arab Revolt. The party considers the Palestinian cause as one of the major issues that it undertakes, he said.



Ahmad Al Najdawi

The Baath, he said, calls for equal rights among citizens without discrimination in colour, sex or race, and opposes all practices that infringe upon public freedoms.

Mr. Najdawi's audience were sceptical over the party's practices in Syria "against public freedoms," and to the Iraqi Baath party as being transformed to a "Saddami one instead of a Baathi."

Mr. Najdawi claimed that Iraq was in its way to introduce pluralism and freedoms but was only delayed because of the Iraq-Iran war and the Gulf war. "Iraq is in no position to allow public freedoms since it is now in special circumstances that dictate its actions," he said. But in Syria there is no justification.

"Saddamism" in Iraq, as Mr. Najdawi put it, was a unifying factor at times of war since there is no other alternative that would unite Iraqis from all sects. The Iraqi president himself wanted greater popular participation, but his experts insisted on a tighter grip on society to avert dissension, he said.

2 killed in Ruseifa fire

AMMAN (J.T.) — As a result of the snow and rain in the country Monday 86 incidents, including fires, were reported to the Civil Defence Department (CDD).

A CDD official said these incidents included 13 fires, one at a sports factory in Ruseifa within the Zarqa governorate.

Press reports had said that two young women, Hanan Hassan, 25, and Abeer Abdullah, 20, who were among the factory workers were killed in the fire that engulfed the factory.

The reports said Mohammad Abbas, 30, was severely burned and injured trying to rescue the two women from the fire.

All the contents of the two-storey building including sponge and machinery were destroyed in the fire, which took the CDD three hours to get under control, reports said.

According to the reports, the factory was set up on a 600 square metres of land, located not far from a residential area that contains a number of schools.

The fire, which is now being

investigated by a special six-member CDD team, damaged windows of neighbouring homes and caused chaos at nearby schools.

Initial estimates put the losses from the fire at nearly JD 500,000.

The CDD said another woman died in the Irbid governorate after suffocating from the kerosene heater and several people were rescued by the CDD after being trapped in a lift following a power failure in one of Amman's buildings.

The CDD said it dealt with 70 rescue operations which included cases of people falling from high places, road accidents, a fainting incident and occupational accidents.

The CDD warned people in low-lying regions to move to higher and safer ground and cautioned the public against slippery roads, especially at night.

In case of an emergency, the CDD has requested the public to call telephone numbers 193, 198 or 199 for assistance.

Hamas rejects U.S. 'terrorism' tag

(Continued from page 1)

West to explain the nature of the movement and its objectives and the justice of its case," Mr. Nazzari said.

Mr. Nazzari denied that Hamas members were extremists, saying the group confined its attacks to occupied Palestinian land. "We are not fanatics. We are open to the ideas of others," he added.

"We are always concerned to avoid shedding innocent blood but we are in a state of war with an occupier."

Hamas, which opposes the U.S.-brokered Middle East peace talks, is a driving force behind the five-year-old revolt against Israeli rule in the territories. With the peace talks making little progress, its support there has grown.

A State Department official said the "terrorism" report would say Hamas "increasingly uses lethal tactics such as firearms and car bombs and that it was responsible for a large number of attacks against Israeli civilian and military targets."

Mr. Nazzari expressed fears that the move to classify Hamas amongst "terrorist" organisations was aimed at legitimising an Israeli campaign to uproot it in the occupied territories.

"We only wage military action against the Israelis as part of a legitimate struggle against an occupying force which has usurped our land," he said.

"All the attacks executed recently had military targets ... no violent act has been recorded by Hamas outside occupied Palestine."

The State Department official said the report would state that Iran, Palestinians living outside the occupied territories, and private benefactors in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states supported Hamas financially.

Mr. Nazzari said Hamas was largely funded by people living inside the occupied territories and said anyone suggesting otherwise should back up their charges with documentary evidence.

Quake experts urge study of dams

AMMAN (J.T.) — Participants in a three-day seminar on earthquakes recommended a study of dam foundations in Jordan, particularly the King Talal Dam, and the geological strata surrounding the dams to determine the effects of earth tremors on them.

In concluding their meeting in Amman, the delegates from several departments and organisations said everything possible should be done to strengthen the bases of the dams and the slopes behind them.

They said the proposed dam at Karameh in the Jordan Valley falls within the Jericho rift — a known earthquake fault — and therefore will be vulnerable.

The delegates urged the Natural Resources Authority (NRA), which controls the Seismological Centre, and the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment to start serious

cooperation.

They proposed that a case study be conducted on a "model" dam in order to develop precautionary measures that would be adopted to aid in preventing destruction.

Individuals involved in seismological measurements and earthquake researchers at the NRA or universities should be provided with the appropriate material and support, the participants stressed.

The meeting, organised by the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA), called for the unification of basic data and information related to earthquake among the various units involved in this study and urged the concerned authorities to establish a national earthquake centre to bring together skilled personnel and equipment for a unified effort.

Furthermore, the participants called for the unification of all

codes concerning designs and other specifications in buildings and urged the JEA to continually organise training seminars for civil engineers on designing and implementing construction projects with guidelines to safeguard against the destructive effects of earthquakes.

Another recommendation suggested the formation of a national information plan to spread earthquake-related information to the public.

Minister of Public Works Saad Hayel Srour, who opened the meeting, said that although earthquakes are rare in Jordan, the establishment of a national network to monitor tremors was necessary.

Several working papers on the geological structure of Jordan and plans to face the dangers of tremors were reviewed during the meeting.

Shakespeare comes to Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — It's not every day that one gets the opportunity to watch a live professional performance of one of the world's best-known dramatists' most popular plays.

But this week in Amman, the British Council, in cooperation with the Amman Plaza Hotel, Emirates Airline and TNT, are presenting two performances of William Shakespeare's delightful comedy "A Midsummer Night's Dream," performed by the professional British touring theatre company, The London Shakespeare Group.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" is the story of four lovers, two of whom are escaping from Athens

where they are being forced to marry those that they do not love.

They meet in a wood as they are making their escape; the wood is the favourite haunt of the fairies.

All is not well amongst the fairies either, as the fairy king and queen have quarrelled.

Everything becomes very complicated when Puck, a mischievous sprite, obtains a magic flower, with powers to make people fall in love.

As he uses this amongst the human and fairy communities, confusion reigns, and the affections of many are thrown into uproar with very entertaining results.

The London Shakespeare Group was created in association with the British Council with the objective of making Shakespeare's plays accessible throughout the world. It has been doing so for the past sixteen years.

The top actors who are selected to take part have to be adaptable, as they tour the world they play in a variety of venues to audiences of all ages and nationalities.

The London Shakespeare Group will perform a matinee at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday Feb. 3 at the Royal Cultural Centre, and a dinner theatre performance at the Amman Plaza Hotel on Thursday Feb. 4th.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Bilbeisi presents credentials in France

PARIS (Petra) — Ambassador to France Mu'tasem Bilbeisi Tuesday presented his credentials to French President Francois Mitterrand. Mr. Bilbeisi conveyed the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein to President Mitterrand and stressed Jordan's interest in further enhancing ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries. President Mitterrand praised his relations of friendship with King Hussein, and voiced his appreciation to and admiration of Jordan's role in enhancing stability in the Middle East.

Food distributed to Tafleeh's poor

TAFLEEH (Petra) — The Social Development Department Tuesday distributed canned food to poor and needy families in the various towns, villages and residential areas in Tafleeh Governorate, the director of the department, Zeid Maabreh, said. Mr. Maabreh said Tuesday's food distribution was part of a programme aimed at assisting poor families in the governorate. He said the department had drawn up a programme for the distribution of foodstuffs to a number of villages in the governorate. He added that the department provided foodstuffs to the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) for distribution to poor families registered with the GUVS branch in Tafleeh.

Red Crescent elects secretary-general

AMMAN (Petra) — The Executive Committee of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) Tuesday elected Fahd Ijjeh as secretary-general and Walid Amin Al Sayyed as treasurer. The committee, meeting under the chairmanship of President Mohammad Al Mulaq Al Hadad, also elected a legal committee which will help it in the implementation of its humanitarian tasks. The committee also listened to a briefing by the society's emergency relief committee about the society's plans to provide assistance to snow-affected

ALO to hold meeting in Amman

AMMAN (Petra) — Representatives of the Labour Ministry and the Arab Labour Organisation (ALO) met Tuesday to discuss preparations for the 20th session of the ALO conference, due to convene in Amman from April 5 to 12. Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti Wednesday will meet with the ALO director general to discuss preparations for the conference.

Aqaba to build health centre

AMMAN (Petra) — In 1992, the Aqaba Health Department and its centres treated 142,457 citizens, Department Director Abdul Rahman Al Shuweikini said. He said the department recently received a school building in the old town of Aqaba and plans to convert it into a primary health-care centre. Following the necessary maintenance work, the new centre will be supplied with equipment and staffed with medical specialists, Dr. Shuweikini said. He said the health department has asked the Aqaba Region Authority to allocate land in the areas of Nattan, Muneshir, Al Aal, Al Marfar and Al Alamiyyeh, on which to establish primary health-care centres. The department will soon open a primary health-care centre in the Rawdhah neighbourhood in Aqaba city.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.
- ★ Medical book exhibition at Al Bashir Hospital.
- ★ Exhibition of watercolour paintings by Syrian artist Nazir Nah' at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by Ahd Bani Yassin and Nawfal Mandeel at Deir Abee Saced Girls' Secondary School.

ITALIAN FILM WEEK

- ★ English-subtitled Italian film entitled "Verso Sera" (Towards Evening) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8 p.m.

FILM

- ★ Video film entitled "Conducting Unbecoming" at the British Council at 7 p.m. (103 min., suitable for persons 15 years and over).

THEATRE

- ★ Shakespeare's play "A Midsummer Night's Dream" performed by the London Shakespeare Group at the Amman Plaza Hotel.



From "Jerusalem Gates," a new book by Mohammad Hashem Ghoshch, published by Abdul Hamid Shomran Foundation, 154 pp.

New book depicts Jerusalem's gates

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jerusalem Gates by Mohammad Hashem Ghoshch is an illustrated book on the history of the ancient gates of Jerusalem.

The illustrations include photographs and drawings of the eight gates of the walled city; and the historical focus is on the various invasions launched against the city by the Romans and Crusaders over the centuries.

The eight gates include: Jaffa Gate, King David Gate, Dung Gate, St. Stefan's Gate, Herod's Gate, Damascus Gate, the New Gate and the Golden Gate which remained closed for ages.

The author describes Jerusalem as having been inhabited since 1800 B.C. and one of the principal holy places of the three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The gates are located within the wall which surrounds the old city that embodies Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Armenian quarters.

The city also houses the most sacred holy places for Christians and Muslims.

Jerusalem Gates is published by the Abdel Hamid Shomran Foundation and contains 154 pages.

Jordan Times

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Economic Forum

Gold is invited back

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

I was fascinated by an article published in the "Wall Street Journal Europe" (Jan. 5, 1993) under the title "The Curse of Being a Reserve Currency" and written by Lewis E. Lehrman and John Mueller. I thought I should acquaint the readers of this column with its theme.

A reserve currency is one which is widely and freely accepted for the settlement of international payments and is therefore held by central banks as part of their foreign exchange reserves to effect these payments. The U.S. dollar is the outstanding example of a major reserve currency; the pound sterling played a similar role in the past and the Deutsch mark is assuming the role of a regional reserve currency in Europe.

Because the reserve currency, say the U.S. dollar, is used to finance international trade (of goods and services), the dollar holdings of foreign central banks must increase at a rate not less than that of the expansion of that trade if dollar shortage is not to develop and hamper international trade and thereby world economic growth.

The only way to increase international liquidity through acquiring more dollars by the rest of the world is for the reserve

currency country (U.S. in this example) to purchase more wealth abroad than it sells, i.e. run balance of payment deficits. This demand for wealth without a matching supply causes inflation.

Any country, other than the reserve currency country, would be forced to correct its balance of payment imbalances or else lose all its international reserves. But the reserve currency country's loss of reserves takes the form of IOUs to foreign central banks, so its net reserves can be negative without any absolute limit. The inflationary pressure is therefore unchecked and spreads to other countries. The reserve currency country may, eventually, apply monetary brakes, in which case it sparks alarming deflation which similarly spreads to other countries. But it most probably resorts to large devaluations, as Britain did in 1931, 1949 and 1967, and the U.S. did in the 1970s and 1980s.

Then the authors set out to beautifully explain the currency crisis which hit Europe last September (Black Wednesday). The Deutsch mark is being used as the reserve currency of Europe; foreign central banks held about 200 billion marks (\$125 billion) at the end of 1991. As the dollar reserve role created inflation in the U.S., the same role of the mark seeded inflation in Germany.

Inflation in Germany is higher than in the U.S., not because of German unification but because unification has been partly financed through the reserve currency status of the mark.

The Bundesbank had tried to curb inflation that built up for years and the adjustment was dramatic. Between the end of 1991 and Sept. 1992 (month of the European monetary crisis) the net reserves of the Bundesbank grew by a staggering \$60 billion, which necessarily mirrored identical net reserve losses — and balance of payment deficits of other (European) countries. This put impossible strains on the European exchange rate mechanism. The pound sterling was a direct victim.

The article ends up with a grand conclusion. To end the curses of reserve currency systems, there has to be an international currency which satisfies an essential condition. Such money must be one country's asset without being another country's liability. The only money which meets this condition is gold. They call for establishing a modern international gold standard based on ending reserve currencies and ending monetisation of government debt (i.e., purchasing the public debt of a country by its central bank).

Reward out of place

DURING A trip he made to the Arabian Gulf last week British Prime Minister John Major secured for his country a four billion dollars arms deal. It was, apparently, Britain's reward for its loyal partnership in the military, political and economic campaigns against Iraq and the time to collect on its active role in the so-called Desert Storm operation.

It does not require much imagination to realise that the Gulf war that was launched with fanfare in 1991 in response to the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait created an urgent need for rearmament in the Gulf. So Britain was not far behind the military-industrial complex in the U.S. in seeking business from those countries which were supposedly saved by Desert Storm. Mr. Major conceded that last week's Gulf deal would save or generate many thousands of jobs, something that will augur well for the British economy as well as to the political fortunes of Mr. Major's own Conservative Party.

This much is already digested and accepted as part of the post-war reality. What is surprising, however, is the fact that the Gulf states have agreed to reward London at a time when Major's government has actively and effectively thwarted all efforts to help out the besieged Muslim Bosnians, including those that were contemplated by both France and the U.S. The British prime minister has even been at loggerheads with his predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, over the Bosnian conflict when she called for military intervention to stop the slaughter and systematic rape at the hands of the Bosnian Serbs. Why give him a shot in the arm now, when he has also been the prime mover behind U.S. President Bill Clinton's retreat on his campaign pledge to lift the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims and to use limited military intervention against Serbian forces, is totally mind boggling to us. French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas had spearheaded a French chorus of voices demanding instant military intervention in former Yugoslavia in the aftermath of the shocking news that Serb forces used systematic rape as a weapon to realise their ethnic cleansing policy in Bosnia. But, despite this, Major persisted in doing the wrong thing by sending a personal appeal to Clinton asking him not to implement his declared policy in defence of human rights and humanitarian law in Bosnia. Such cold-blooded posture by Britain is rewarded by Gulf states with a four billion dollar deal, and this we cannot understand. The least that Arabs and Muslims should have expected is that such a big arms deal would be made conditional on Britain changing its policy towards the Bosnian Muslims by showing more sensitivity to their plight. The Arab and Muslim worlds should embark on a more candid policy towards all those countries that have aided and abetted the Serbian atrocities by allowing shipments of oil, food and medicines, not to mention armament and ammunition. By boycotting such governments, or at least withholding from helping them economically, the oil-rich Gulf countries can at least add credibility to their policies. It is a credibility that they badly need to regain in order to recuperate from the losses and wounds of the Gulf war.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

WE DO not believe that the differences between Baghdad and Tehran revolve around financial matters and that normalisation of bilateral relations hinges on Iraq paying compensation to Iran, said Al Rai Arab daily Tuesday. Statements attributed to the Iranian president that Baghdad should pay compensation before normalisation of relations can start can not be true, the paper said. But what is true and certain is that Iran is the next target of aggression by the Western coalition whether it sided with Iraq or not and whether Tehran ended the sanctions against Iraq or remained faithful to the coalition's conspiracy, the paper said. Tehran is wrong to believe that a weak Iraq is in Iran's interest because the Western coalition is directing its aggression on Islam and aiming to pillage the Islamic Nation's oil wealth at any price and therefore a weak Iraq means a weak Arab and Islamic Nation, the paper pointed out. It said that if the differences between Iran and Iraq are over financial matters, they can easily be solved, but it would make us continually sad should the differences will end and that Iran will bring the current blockade on Iraq to an end before the Western coalition directs its aggression on Tehran and the rest of the Islamic nations.

SAWT AL SHAAB daily discussed the summit meeting between King Hussein and Palestine President Yasser Arafat, expressing hope that it would open the way for a wider scale summit grouping the other Arab leaders. The two leaders had consultations about the developments in the region, the peace process and the deported Palestinians — all topics of concern to the Arab masses and governments, said the daily. With his vast experience in Middle East affairs, the King can spearhead efforts towards healing the first among the Arab leaders, should the climate be favourable for his moves, and no doubt the Palestine president can help in this process, the paper pointed out. Indeed, the King's past efforts and mediation bids among the Arab leaders have yielded good results, and any efforts in this direction now will be a welcome move to the Arab masses, the paper added. The paper said that there is no doubt that Palestinian-Jordanian political coordination is firm and continuing, and expressed that the summit, held in Amman, could open the way wide for the other Arab leaders to convene a summit and again bring about solidarity among their countries.

The United Nations' colours won't always be available

By Brian Beedham

LONDON — Many people have come to assume that if there is something awkward to be done in the world, it can be done by slipping one's hand into the comforting palm of the United Nations. The United Nations will agree on what needs to be done, and one can go ahead and do it with the United Nations' blessing.

The row over the bombing of Iraq shows that it is not so. The United Nations' past few years of apparent unity have been a happy accident, which will not endure. The democracies need to work out what they will do when they can no longer slip a hand into the U.N. palm.

This particular argument about Iraq was not fatal. The doubts expressed by Russia and France were throat-clearings, not outright denunciations, and their doubts were anyway about the methods used, not about the desirability of keeping Saddam Hussein under control. Still, here was a warning of things to come.

Before long, the democracies are going to want to do something they think important for the well-being of the world, only to find that they do not command the necessary majority of the Security Council, including the consent of all five veto-wielding powers.

It could happen over Bosnia. ("Russia says no to further action against Serbs.") It could happen in the next clash with Saddam Hussein. ("China backs Arab protesters.") It could happen over another Somalia, because the inconvenient fact is that only western armies can currently mount a rescue operation like the one in Somalia. ("West accused of new colonialism.") It will happen somewhere. It is inconceivable that the cosy United Nations of the first post-cold war years, that happy accident, will survive.

For a moment, when communism collapsed, people thought the world was one again. It was not. New divisions are appearing and old ones are reappearing.

Some are divisions of blood and loyalty. (Russians are reluctant to join the condemnation of Serbia because the Serbs are fellow Slavs and old allies). Some are new divisions of ideology. (Fundamentalist Islam dislikes the West because it thinks that

the West has bad ideas). Some divisions are straight power contests. (China wants to be a power in its own right, with its own team of allies. So does Europe say some Europeans).

These reemerging fault lines will surely break up the consensus of the past few years. The old communist-pluralist fault line has gone, but others — of race, religion, ambition, all the things that tend to divide the world into Us and Them — are still there. The

first tremors have been felt under our feet these past weeks.

No fiddling with U.N. voting rules will stop it from happening. If you increase the number of permanent members of the Security Council, you increase the number of vetoes, and make it even likelier that something which ought to be done will not get done because somebody says "no". If you abolish the veto and make the Security Council reach its decisions by weighted majority

vote, things are little better. It will not be hard for a big power to collect enough smaller countries' votes to block the necessary action.

The U.N. rules of the game say that a country may fight to defend itself, or to help a sworn ally, but otherwise it cannot fire a shot without the United Nations' consent. That is no comfort to future Bosnians and Somalians and Kuwaitis. The consent for their rescue may be unobtainable. So

what do the would-be rescuers do then?

The first reaction of decent liberals, including those in the Clinton administration, is to try to keep the post-cold war consensus going as long as possible. Make a small concession to China here, give Russia a little more aid there, flatter France a touch, and all may yet be well.

It won't be — and not only because of the cracking noise coming from those fault lines.

The concession made to China would probably have to be another closing of eyes to some human rights violation, which does not come easily to decent liberals. More money for Russia is economically useless until Russia gets its economy reorganised, and pouring money down drains does not come easily to money-strapped recession sufferers.

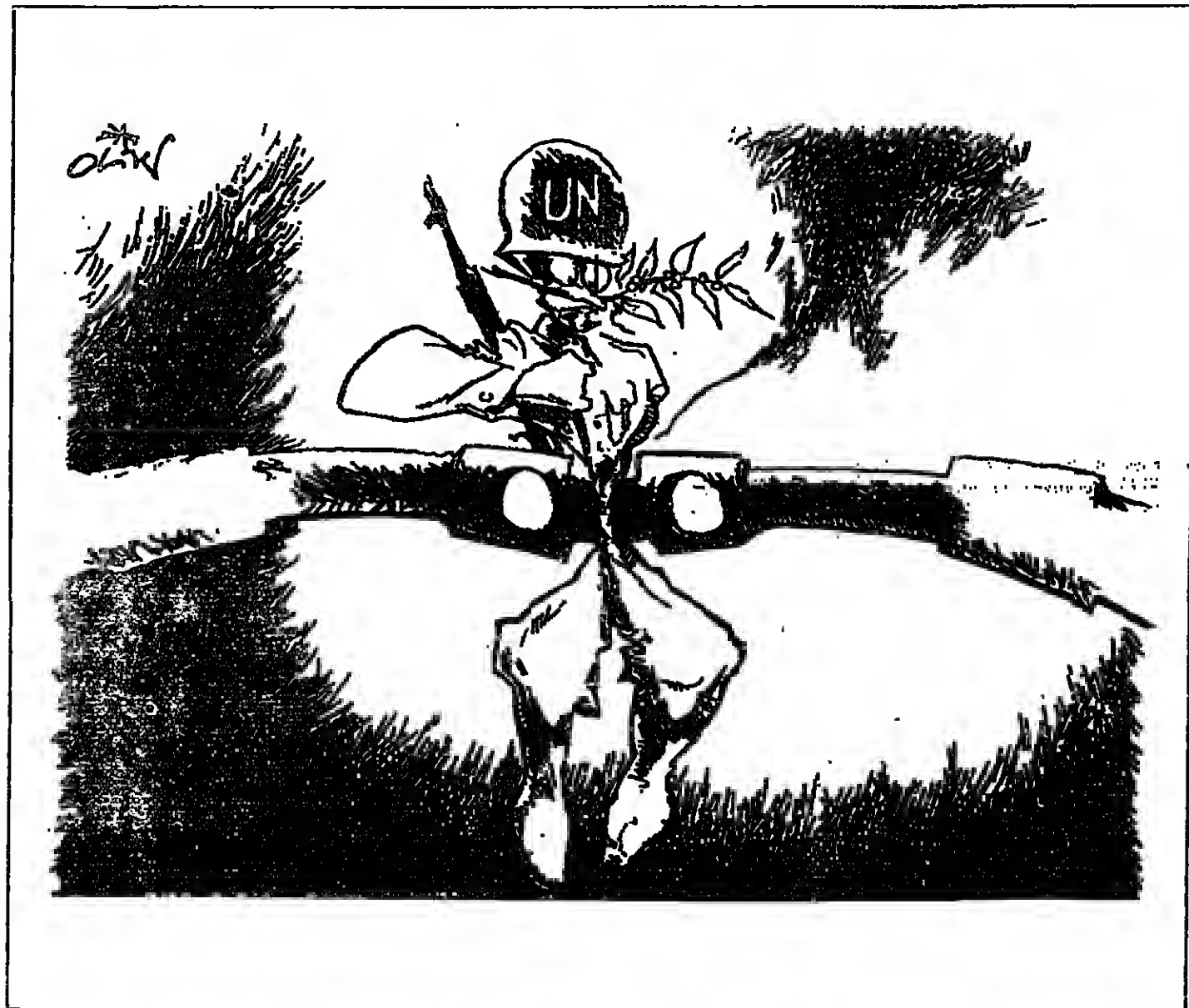
Of course, it is best to have the United Nations' blessing whenever it is available. It means that when you send your soldiers into a fight to remedy some fearful injustice, they will not have to fight anybody but the injustice-perpetrator himself.

Whenever it is possible, it is right to work through the United Nations — but it will not always be possible. A small country will get invaded by a bigger one, and because the invader comes from the wrong side of one of those fault lines it will be impossible to get the Security Council to order his removal. A famine will break out somewhere in Africa or Asia and it will not be possible to agree whose soldiers should convoy the food past the looters to the starving.

It will then be necessary to take a deep breath, and make a hard decision. The end of the cold war, those two or three fleeting years ago, was a stupendous opportunity. It opened up new possibilities of protecting the weak, feeding the hungry, sowing the seeds of tolerant politics and efficient economics. It still does. But those who wish to use the opportunity are on notice. It will sometimes be no good going to the United Nations. They may have to do it themselves, or see it left undone.

This is today's real question about the United Nations. There is much grumbling about its bureaucracy, its sluggishness, its occasional corruption. The bigger problem is that it may soon lose the brief cohesion that sent it into Kuwait and Bosnia and Somalia. It may no longer be able to act decisively and consistently.

And then, to the question of what to do when the United Nations is unusable, those who do not wish to abandon the world to its fate will sometimes have to reply: Very well, we will do it alone. — International Herald Tribune.



Shaky start suggests problems for Clinton

By Gene Gibbons

Reuter

WASHINGTON — Bill Clinton's shaky start in the first days of his presidency is raising questions about how he will fare when he tackles the major issues of the economy and health care reform.

He had to withdraw his nominee for attorney-general, Zoe Baird, who had broken the law by employing illegal immigrants to work in her home, after less than 48 hours in the White House.

No sooner had the dust settled from that episode, when Clinton row broke out over Mr. Clinton's plan to end a ban on homosexuals in the armed forces.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn and the nation's military leaders opposed the proposal and again the president was forced to give ground.

To avert a potentially damaging showdown with Congress, he agreed to a six-month review of the issue in exchange for an agreement by the military to stop asking recruits about their sexual orientation.

"The compromise is not everything I would have hoped for, or everything that I have stood for, but it is plainly a substantial step in the right direction," Mr. Clinton told a news conference Friday.

It was a baptism of fire for the new commander-in-chief but

probably tame by comparison with the criticism he will face when he addresses the country's complex economic and health care problems.

Mr. Clinton plans to unveil his economic reconstruction programme in his first state of the union speech to Congress on February 17. A task force headed by his wife, Hillary, is to complete a health care reform package by early May.

These initiatives are crucial to the success of Mr. Clinton's presidency, and political analysts say his shaky start in the first days of his presidency has weakened his political standing even before he addresses these issues.

"In his first week in office, he has bashed his own image as a sure-footed politician," said Paul Stares of the Brookings Institution, a Washington think-tank.

White House spokeswoman Dee Dee Myers disagrees.

This is not a one-week presidency. It's a four-year, and hopefully eight-year presidency," she said. "One of the things we learned during the campaign was to take the long view."

The political squalls that marred Mr. Clinton's first days in office were "more distracting in terms of public debate (than they were) in terms of the president's being able to focus on things that

build the economy and reduce the deficit will face great opposition. The same is true of health care reform.

Experts say any economic programme that does not worsen the deficit will almost certainly call for higher taxes and cuts in popular benefits for the middle class.

They say controlling the country's growing health care costs probably means fundamental changes in how medical services are provided in the United States.

Some political analysts wonder whether Clinton is really the best man for the job, given the way he backed away from confrontation in his first days as president.

"If you look at his pattern as governor of Arkansas, what you see is a guy who tries to pre-empt a consensus, but then when he runs into trouble, his record is to accommodate," said Bruce Buchanan, a University of Texas political expert.

Mr. Clinton's challenge is all the more daunting if the opinion polls are accurate.

One poll made public Saturday showed Mr. Clinton had a higher disapproval rating than six predecessors at the same stage of their presidencies.

The poll, conducted for Newsweek magazine, showed Mr. Clinton with a disapproval rating

Israeli army — come out or we'll blow up the house

By Sami Aboudi

Reuter

OCCUPIED GAZA — Muin Daghmagh rushed his parents, wife and children out of their home when Israeli troops stormed into the Tuffah neighbourhood of Gaza City at dawn and ordered them to leave.

When they returned a few hours later, the 12 members of the family stood in shock unable to recognise their house. The roof had collapsed, furniture and clothes were burnt and the walls, cracked by the force of an exploding rocket, were riddled with bullets.

The Daghmaghs, like dozens of other Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, are suffering from a new Israeli policy that Palestinians call "wanton destruction". Soldiers call it a necessary tactic.

Since last August, Israeli soldiers have been using anti-tank weapons, including rockets and rocket-propelled grenades, to destroy houses where armed fugitives are suspected to be hiding.

"We left our house along with the rest of our neighbours, thinking they were going to conduct a search inside. It never occurred to us they were going to bomb it with rockets," said 36-year-old Muin, sifting through charred clothes.

several neighbouring buildings said soldiers laughed as fire gutted the building.

The army, seeking to avoid casualties, says heavy weapons are necessary to fight armed Arabs waging their five-year-old revolt against Israeli occupation.

It says it acts only when it has "solid information" gunmen are inside, a warning is given and all those willing to leave are evacuated.

Muin and his neighbours said no fugitives were found in the 10 houses destroyed or damaged during the raid. Instead, they said the army detained his younger brother Harbi, 22, and five other residents, none previously listed as wanted.

The army said the six were suspected of helping wanted activists.

Human rights groups say rocketing of houses has increased steadily since August when Israeli soldiers destroyed a house in Gaza City where wanted people were thought to be hiding.

The Gaza Centre for Rights and Law has documented 18 incidents involving 36 houses in the Gaza Strip since August. So far in January, the army has used the method four times.

A Reuter reporter saw 10 houses damaged in a single incident in the West Bank.

"In most cases there were no wanted people in the houses," said Ronny Talmor, a member of the board of directors of the

Israeli Centre for Human Rights in the occupied territories, B'Tselem.

Ms. Talmor said her organisation was still awaiting an answer from the army on whether Palestinians and lost houses were entitled to compensation.

The army told Reuters it would consider any complaint or request for compensation. But Palestinians who lost their homes have not considered filing complaints, with many convinced the army would never pay.

Palestinians see the use of rockets on houses as another of the harsh measures they believe Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin introduced after taking office in July last year. He is also defence minister.

Raji Sourani of the Centre for Rights and Law called the method "purely Mr. Rabin's invention". Chief Palestinian negotiator to Middle East peace talks Haidar Abdul Shafi termed the raids "wanton destruction".

Palestinians accuse Mr. Rabin of giving the army a free hand, leading to a sharp rise in killings. The December expulsion of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon and the rocketing of homes.

Ms. Talmor, who is compiling a B'Tselem report on destruction of homes, said: "The conclusion, I believe, is going to be that they use this harsh method without any results and causing enormous damage to houses of people who are not accused of anything."

كنا من الامل

Palestinians reject Rabin deal

(Continued from page 1)

operative meaning against Israel in any international forum," Mr. Rabin said, referring indirectly to the threat of U.N. sanctions.

At the United Nations, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the steps announced by Israel made further action by the Security Council unnecessary. He told a news conference in New York Israel would permit a "significant number of the deportees to return to either Israel or to the occupied territories within the next several days."

Israel would also reduce the terms of all the other evictees, which meant all would be able to return before the end of 1993. Israel would also maintain an appeals and review process for the evictees which meant some might be returned even before the end of the year.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance would also be assured to the evictees "where they are at the present time."

"The United States believes that this process which is being announced by Israel today is consistent with United Nations Resolution 799 on the deportees," he added, referring to a council resolution adopted on Dec. 18 demanding the immediate return of all the expelled Palestinians. "As a consequence of the steps that Israel will take, we believe that further action by the Security Council is unnecessary and could even undercut the process which is already under way," Mr. Christopher said.

The United States would consult further on the issue with Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, "but I repeat that we believe that further steps here in the Security Council are unnecessary and that taking of further steps might undercut the process which is under and which we think is very important."

The United States believed it was time to look ahead and concentrate on reinvigorating the Arab-Israeli process, he added. In Marj Al Zohour, Lebanon, the Palestinian evictees snubbed Mr. Rabin's offer to take back 100 of them and insisted all must now be allowed home.

"Let he who rejects the American-Israeli deal raise his hand," Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, leader of the 396 men, told the men at prayers at their snow-covered camp in South Lebanon. All raised their hands.

"Let he who agrees to this deal now raise his hand," Dr. Rantisi said. None of the evictees moved. "God take our revenge on those who suppressed us. God take our revenge on those who expelled us. God punish Rabin," prayed the men as they knelt on a muddy road to biting cold. Israel expelled the Palestinians

on Dec. 17 alleging they were Muslim militants. Lebanon refused to accept them, leaving them stranded between Israeli and Lebanese lines.

Palestinian peace negotiators and the Palestine Liberation Organisation also spurned the Israeli offer and insisted the U.N. Security Council force Israel to take all back in line with Resolution 799.

But with U.S. assurances that no further U.N. action was necessary, Israel said it was the evictees' problem if they spurned the offer.

Dr. Rantisi did so. "This initiative is categorically rejected," he said, dismissing it as "an Israeli manoeuvre and American-Israeli conspiracy."

The return of 100 would admit the legality of the expulsion of the rest and open the door for the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from the occupied territories, he said.

"Last night I toured every single tent in the camp and everyone agrees that they should all go back or stay here."

Dr. Rantisi also rejected the offer of aid.

"We stand firm on our position and we consider that the only solution is the full implementation of 799," he added.

Fourteen evictees were returned by helicopter after Israel said they were expelled in error. Five more were taken to hospital in Israel's South Lebanon "security zone."

Dr. Rantisi said evictees were still willing for sick among them, to be evacuated by the Red Cross to Israeli hospitals.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Fawzi Boustros said that what he described as "these American efforts" for a compromise were a positive start.

But Washington and the international community must do more to solve the problem in line with Resolution 799, he said.

"Talk about the immediate return or part of the deportees is a start towards implementing resolution 799 on condition that it will be completed for the other deportees," he told reporters.

"If there is no solution it will reflect negatively on the (Arab-Israeli) peace talks," he said. In Tunis, the PLO rejected Israel's offer.

"The PLO rejects such a deal and nobody has the right to deal on matters related to the fate of Palestinian citizens... behind the back of the Security Council," PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo told Reuters.

Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to peace talks, demanded the implementation of Resolution 799. She said Israel's move was "a

way of circumventing 799, and it does not address the whole issue of the illegality of expulsion."

"If this is a deal with the United States it is obviously in violation of its own vote at the United Nations," she said.

In Cairo, Nabil Shaath, political adviser to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said: "We refuse to

accept this solution... we want all the (expellees) to be returned."

"How come the Americans say this is a solution? What kind of a solution is that to take 100 and leave 300 behind? ... anything short of their full return does not solve the problem," Dr. Shaath said.

"This solution solves nothing.

In fact, it only reduces the enormity of the problem from cutting the number of (expellees) from 400 to 300. But the problem is still enormous."

He said if diplomacy failed to return all the expellees, the PLO would press for U.N. sanctions against Israel.



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Saddam, Arafat meet in Baghdad

(Continued from page 1)

less willing than to deal with President Saddam.

Mr. Arafat, whose constituency is the focus of Arab-Israeli peace talks, still holds political weight despite the cost of his backing for Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait.

The PLO lost its major Arab financial backers while hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were expelled from Kuwait and other Gulf states.

PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas, mak-

ing the first visit last month to Riyadh by a PLO leader since the Gulf war, apologised for his organisation's backing of Baghdad against the Saudi-based alliance.

The statement sparked widespread anger among many ordinary Palestinians who idolise President Saddam for his Gulf war attacks on Israel. The PLO later said Mr. Abbas was expressing a personal view.

Iraq has been trying hard to ease its isolation in the Arab and Western world partly as a way to break the grip of a sweeping U.N. trade embargo.

Government trying to minimise damage

(Continued from page 1)

males and females will have separate timings," said a spokesman for the centre.

"However, some of our clients do participate in various activities together," said the spokesman, who insisted on anonymity.

"We haven't had any problems of complaints in the last four years," he said. "If the people are happy and not complaining, why should anyone else tell them how to conduct themselves socially?"

The law is reminiscent of an aborted Ministry of Education rule that fathers could not watch their daughters taking part in sport activities and the segregation of male and female staff at the Ministry of Social Affairs in the first half of 1991, both decreed by Muslim Brotherhood ministers at the time.

The argument behind fathers staying away from daughter's sports rule, which drew an uproar in the society, was that other girls would also be taking part in sports events wearing athletes' shorts.

The new draft law has also drawn fierce attack from many Jordanian girls whom the legislation ostensibly seeks to "protect."

"We don't need that kind of protection," said Yola, a 27-year-old business executive, describing the law as "ridiculous."

"We have been used to mixing freely with men and not feel embarrassed about it," she said. "It is presumptuous on the part of our parliamentarians to think they could impose things on us."

Toujan Faisal, a leading women's rights activist, described the law as "a blatant violation of personal freedom and privacy."

"I am most surprised that the House endorsed such a provision," said Ms. Faisal. "It is an intrusion

ment on individual's rights and the freedom of choice, and parliament has no business to get into such things."

Am disgusted," said Maha Shaer, a journalist. "It is a dumb and stupid move on the part of our elected representatives who have much more important issues to handle."

Observers believe that the law could also be harmful to Jordan on the external scene at a time when the Kingdom is earnestly pursuing efforts to attract foreign investments.

"The law in itself is not a big deal, but the implications of discriminating between the sexes in an atmosphere where societies are opening up and being conducive to tolerance of all ways of life are not very good for Jordan," said an observer. "The entire philosophy of segregating sexes is not understood outside the Islamic world."

At least one ambassador is known to have approached the one minister this week seeking clarifications about the new law and asserting that it bears all hallmarks of "a tightening of the society at a time when Jordan needs more and more opening up to the international community and businessmen."

By and large the diplomatic community is "bemused and saddened" over the draft law, said an observer; "bemused since it is such a silly law which might deny some people the 'pleasure' of watching scantily-clad women at swimming pools, and saddened because the Jordanian society is known for its tolerance and it is unbefitting of it to adopt and enforce such a law."

"Let us hope that the Upper House would act and preempt the imposition of ways of life on society."

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| Holder of ticket No. 65404 (A+B) Wins JD 4,000 | Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 1,600 each wins JD 80 65405 65414 65504 66404 75404 65403 65494 65304 64404 55404 |
| Holder of ticket No. 14513 (A+B) Wins JD 3,500 | Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 1,400 each wins JD 70 14514 14523 14613 15513 24513 14512 14503 14413 13513 04513 |
| Holder of ticket No. 25893 (A+B) Wins JD 2,500 | Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 1,300 each wins JD 60 25894 25803 25993 26893 35893 25892 25883 25793 24893 15893 |
| Holder of ticket No. 05539 (A+B) Wins JD 2,000 | Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 800 each wins JD 40 05530 05549 05639 06639 15539 05538 05529 05439 04539 85539 |
| Holder of ticket No. 18588 (A+B) Wins JD 1,500 | Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 600 each wins JD 30 18589 18598 18688 19588 28588 18587 18578 18488 17588 08588 |
| Holder of ticket No. 00205 (A+B) Wins JD 1,250 | Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 400 each wins JD 20 00206 00215 00305 01205 10205 00204 00295 00105 09205 80205 |
| Holder of ticket No. 65274 (A+B) Wins JD 1,000 | Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 300 each wins JD 15 65275 65284 65374 66274 75274 65273 65264 65174 64274 55274 |

| | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Ticket numbers | 8016 (A+B) | Win JD 400 each |
| Ticket numbers | 7884 (A+B) | Win JD 100 each |

TICKETS ENDING WITH

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 935 (A+B) | Win JD 50 each | 57 (A+B) | Win JD 10 each |
| 15,000 ticket ending with | 9 (A+B) | | Win JD 3 each |

COVER PRIZES FOR THE LOTTERY SELLERS

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 90 covers, attached to the stub of 10, ending in | 307 567 720 649 803 (A+B) | Win JD 30 |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------|

Winners of the grand prizes in the special issue number 1 of Jan. 17, 1993

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | |
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SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

JBF seeks to resolve latest controversy

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) has lately formed two committees in a bid to resolve the latest controversy which hit the First Division Basketball Championship in the final Ahli-Orthodox match last Tuesday. An investigative committee will look into match mismanagement on the part of the referees, while another will approach both clubs to try to find an acceptable solution that will serve the best interest of the game. Meanwhile, Al Ahli's board has appealed to the Ministry of Youth and is awaiting a reply, while JBF Referee Committee member Hisham Natsheh has submitted his resignation.

Unseeded Cunha E. Silva stuns Sanchez

DUBAI (AP) — Unseeded Joao Cunha E. Silva of Portugal stunned fifth seed Emilio Sanchez of Spain in the first round of the inaugural \$1 million Dubai Duty Free/BMW Tennis Open with a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 victory. Third-seeded Karel Novacek of the Czech Republic however had no problems in beating compatriot Daniel Vacek in straight sets 6-0, 7-5. The other winners were sixth seed Andrei Cherkasov of Russia, Claudio Mezzadri of Switzerland, Germany's Karsten Braasch, Jeremy Bates of England and Sweden's Lars Wahlgren and Lars Jonsson. Bates, a late entry to the tournament, knocked out the dangerous Christian Bergstrom of Sweden 7-6, 6-1 and now meets Cunha E. Silva in the second round.

Germans may look for compromise in Strauss row

BONN (R) — German swimming chiefs have decided against taking immediate legal action against the sport's ruling body in their dispute over former world champion Astrid Strauss, who blames a positive drugs test on a heavy drinking session. In a strongly-worded letter last month the German Swimming Federation (DSV) had threatened to sue the International Swimming Federation (FINA) if it did not go back on its decision to increase a ban on Strauss to 18 months following a positive test for steroids. DSV president Klaus Henter said: "Perhaps there will be a possibility of coming to an agreement with FINA at the World Cup meeting in Gelsenkirchen (in Germany in mid-February). We did not make a decision today."

Kendall snaps up Sansom for Everton

LONDON (R) — Everton manager Howard Kendall signed former England left-back Kenny Sansom on a free transfer Tuesday 24 hours after selling defender Martin Keown to Arsenal for two million pounds (\$2.92 million). Sansom, 34, who played nearly 400 games for Arsenal and won 86 England caps, has been released by Coventry after 23 appearances this season.

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE
Atlantic Division

| | W | L | PCT. | GB |
|--------------|----|----|------|--------|
| New York | 25 | 15 | .625 | — |
| New Jersey | 25 | 19 | .568 | 2 |
| Boston | 22 | 21 | .512 | 4 1/2 |
| Orlando | 19 | 19 | .500 | 5 |
| Philadelphia | 17 | 24 | .415 | 8 1/2 |
| Miami | 13 | 27 | .325 | 12 |
| Washington | 12 | 29 | .293 | 13 1/2 |

Central Division

| | W | L | PCT. | GB |
|-----------|----|----|------|-------|
| Chicago | 29 | 15 | .659 | — |
| Cleveland | 25 | 18 | .581 | 3 1/2 |
| Charlotte | 21 | 20 | .512 | 6 1/2 |
| Indiana | 22 | 21 | .512 | 6 1/2 |
| Atlanta | 21 | 21 | .500 | 7 |
| Detroit | 19 | 23 | .452 | 9 |
| Milwaukee | 18 | 24 | .429 | 10 |

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

| | W | L | PCT. | GB |
|-------------|----|----|------|--------|
| San Antonio | 26 | 14 | .650 | — |
| Utah | 27 | 15 | .643 | — |
| Houston | 24 | 18 | .571 | 3 |
| Denver | 15 | 26 | .366 | 11 1/2 |
| Minnesota | 8 | 30 | .211 | 17 |
| Dallas | 3 | 37 | .075 | 23 |

Pacific Division

| | W | L | PCT. | GB |
|---------------|----|----|------|--------|
| Phoenix | 31 | 8 | .795 | — |
| Portland | 28 | 12 | .700 | 3 1/2 |
| Seattle | 28 | 13 | .683 | 4 |
| L.A. Clippers | 22 | 20 | .524 | 10 1/2 |
| L.A. Lakers | 22 | 20 | .524 | 10 1/2 |
| Golden State | 20 | 23 | .465 | 13 |
| Sacramento | 16 | 26 | .381 | 16 1/2 |

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMAR HIRSCH
©1992 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
4♠ 9♠ 7♠ 6♠ 10♠ 8♠ 5♠ 4♠ 3♠
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass
2NT Pass?
What do you bid now?
A.—You know where you want to play, but not at what level. A bid of four spades would show no interest in slam and that's the action you would take without the king of clubs. With so many distributional assets, this hand is too strong to sign off. Bid three spades, intending to correct to four if partner perseveres with no trump.
- Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
4♠ 9♠ 7♠ 6♠ 10♠ 8♠ 5♠ 4♠ 3♠
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?
A.—It is tempting to bid two clubs, probing for a four-card major with the opening bidder. The trouble is that, if opener denies a major by bidding two diamonds, two hearts by you is invitational and you certainly don't want partner to act again. Bid two hearts or, if you play transfers, two diamonds.
- Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
4♠ 9♠ 7♠ 6♠ 10♠ 8♠ 5♠ 4♠ 3♠
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?
A.—Does partner have the right cards for a grand slam? We doubt that even the most ardent scientist would be able to find out. However, we certainly want to be in one should partner bid the ace and king of spades. To find out, use the Grand Slam Force. Bid five no trump, asking partner to bid seven spades holding two of the three top honors.
- Q.4—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
4♠ 9♠ 7♠ 6♠ 10♠ 8♠ 5♠ 4♠ 3♠
Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?
A.—Does partner have the right cards for a grand slam? We doubt that even the most ardent scientist would be able to find out. However, we certainly want to be in one should partner bid the ace and king of spades. To find out, use the Grand Slam Force. Bid five no trump, asking partner to bid seven spades holding two of the three top honors.
- Q.5—North-South vulnerable, as South you hold:
4♠ 9♠ 7♠ 6♠ 10♠ 8♠ 5♠ 4♠ 3♠
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1♠ Pass 1NT Pass
What do you bid now?
A.—Make the king of spades the queen of diamonds, and we would trump rebid three diamonds even though the hand is a point weaker. We, however, the suit doesn't measure up for a jump rebid. We would simply rebid two diamonds.
- Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
4♠ 9♠ 7♠ 6♠ 10♠ 8♠ 5♠ 4♠ 3♠
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1♠ Pass 1NT Pass
What do you bid now?
A.—We can construct hands where North-South are cold for slam opposite a minimum opening bid by North, but there are many many more where North will have too many values in diamonds to make anything above game safe. Therefore, we would jump to four spades.

Van Basten named World Footballer of the Year

ESTORIL, Portugal (R) — AC Milan striker Marco Van Basten was voted 1992 World Footballer of the Year Monday.

The 29-year-old Dutchman, who was named European Player of the Year in 1988, 1989 and 1992, beat Bulgarian Hristo Stoichkov into second place. Germany's Thomas Haessler took third place in a vote by 70.



Marco Van Basten

national team coaches.

Lothar Mathaeus won the award in 1991 after leading Germany to victory in the World Cup.

Van Basten made it clear he planned to stay with AC Milan for the remainder of his playing career.

"I have been with Milan for six years. In two or three weeks I am going to sign a new contract with Milan for a further three years. "Perhaps after that it will be time to end my career."

Commenting on the award, the Dutchman said: "It wasn't exactly a surprise for me. There were

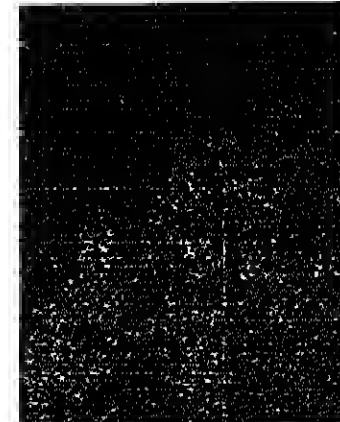


Dennis Bergkamp

three top players so I had a 33 per cent chance.

"I am very pleased and proud to be chosen by a jury of managers who know a lot about football," he added.

Van Basten said he expected to be playing again for AC Milan



Peter Schmeichel

within a month following surgery for an ankle injury.

"I think within two weeks or a month I will be ready to return," he said.

Leading places in the vote for the World Footballer of the Year 1992 award (nationality and club in brackets):

| | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Marco Van Basten (Netherlands, AC Milan) | 151 |
| 2. Hristo Stoichkov (Bulgaria, Barcelona) | 83 |
| 3. Thomas Haessler (Germany, AS Roma) | 61 |
| 4. Jean-Pierre Papin (France, AC Milan) | 46 |
| 5. (Equal) Brian Laudrup (Denmark, Fiorentina) | 44 |
| 5. (Equal) Peter Schmeichel (Denmark, Manchester United) | 44 |
| 6. Dennis Bergkamp (Netherlands, Ajax) | 29 |
| 7. Frank Rijkaard (Netherlands, AC Milan) | 23 |

Party Politics struggling to defend crown

LONDON (R) — Out-of-form Grand National hero Party Politics is a 33-1 chance to repeat his Aintree success April 3.

The horse has flopped in his two starts this season and when the weights for this year's race were published Tuesday he did not look too well treated.

Party Politics will have to carry 70.8 kg, the fourth highest weight and 4 kg more than last year.

Other horses looked better at the weights and bookmakers quickly named last year's runner up Romany King at 14-1, quoting the rest at odds of 20-1 and greater.

"Party politics" form has been abysmal," trainer Nick Gaselee said Tuesday.

"He has run two races and has been pulled up in both. Obviously I am having problems with him. He broke a little blood vessel Saturday and with his wind problem he couldn't go on the heavy ground."

"I am sure he will be there (at Aintree) on the day and if the ground is good he will give a good account of himself. But we have it all to do now."

Last year's Gold Cup winner Cool Ground tops the handicap on 74.4 kg, sharing top weight with Caccia horse Quirinus, the former Paribee winner being prepared for the race by Kevin Morgan.

Another overseas challenger Von Stades, trained in the United States, is given 64.9 kg.

Agassi wins 1993 debut; Borg falls in three sets



Andre Agassi

as I wanted to," Agassi said. "My returns could be a little sharper, but I'm not worried."

Borg, 776 in the world, won his first set in a four match since March of 1983 in a closely contested, 16-point tiebreak by hitting his patented two-fisted backhand for numerous winners, but he lost his serve at 4-5 in the final set to lose the match to the 46th-ranked Ondrus.

Borg, who won several senior events and exhibition matches last year, was admittedly pleased to win a set that counted and said that his progress gives him hope that he will have success in future tour events.

"I showed myself that I can play good tennis in a tour match." The 36-year-old Borg said. "It was the first time in a regular tournament that I have felt really good on the court. "It's nice to have the feeling that you can play good tennis because last year I didn't."

Navratilova survives challenge

YOKOHAMA (R) — Third-seeded Martina Navratilova made heavy weather of disposing of brightly qualified Ai Sugiyama of Japan in the first round of the \$750,000 Toray Pan Pacific Open Tuesday.

Navratilova, 36, took 113 minutes to beat the 17-year-old Tokyo high-school girl 6-3 3-6 6-3.

Serving and returning well, Sugiyama produced an array of daring passing shots, lobs and volleys.

But she was ultimately outclassed by Navratilova's sheer athleticism and prowess at the net. Navratilova, playing in her first tournament since losing in the finals to Monica Seles at the New York Virginia Slims tournament in November, said: "I would have liked a simpler match for the first round, but I am pleased I'm through."

She added: "I'd never heard of her before or knew what she looked like. Looking at the size of her I was surprised she could hit the ball so hard."

The Japanese said: "I was very nervous at the beginning as it was my first match against a top player and my hero at that. I had absolutely nothing to lose so just kept challenging more and more."

Steffi Graf and Gabriela Sabatini, the number one and two seeds, play their first-round matches Wednesday.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 3, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: This is the day to rummage through that well-packed attic to unburden yourself of goods no longer useful. It's also fortunate for the recovery of lost or misplaced items. Follow hunches.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19)

You feel you cannot get your attachment today to go along with a plan of action that means much to you; tonight avoid going to new places.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Keep away from an outside companion who is as determined to have own way in a conflicting matter as much as yourself and keep promises made.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You do not see how to schedule your work load so it is done in a satisfactory manner so don't attempt to do so today, tonight protect your health.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't try to engage yourself in the various entertainments and recreations usually attended upon today, tonight avoid extravagance.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Matters at your residence can be tense if you try to apply any pressure to get members of your own clan to follow through with your strong views.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Seeking information from experts today would merely find

them considering you a snooper so put it off until a more favorable moment.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Don't get involved in financial transactions today or you could make an error commit yourself where it would later prove costly to you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You feel you have a right to have some personal outlets that appeal to you and you do but this is not the day to go after them with force.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Intimate amusements can cause you to lash out at one you love who is blameless in the situation so maintain your temper; tonight romance is not up to par.

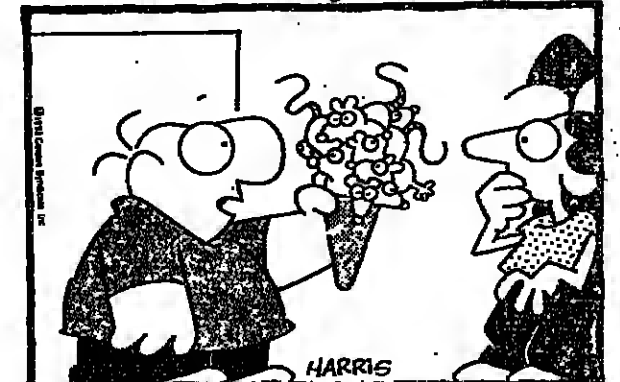
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Take some time out now to show acquaintances that you are aware of their needs and will quietly do what you can to aid them in obtaining them.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Keep out of the public spotlight during the day and spend your time at self-improvements while tonight a personal wish is difficult to obtain.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Think what you can do to keep from going off on some jaunt that may seem to be necessary but it would not end as you have anticipated.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"I asked the florist for something unusual. She gave me a bouquet of gerbils!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

You can see that

DOLOF

CETTO

ALDLAB

STOLCY

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: How the seasick passenger made the ocean voyage—BY RAIL

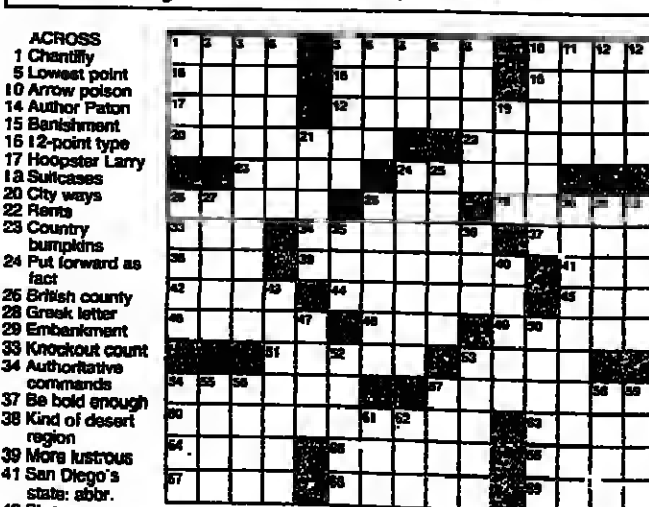
Print answer here: ○○○○○○

(Answers tomorrow)

Jumbles: BALKY RIVET CALICO LEDGER

Answer: How the seasick passenger made the ocean voyage—BY RAIL

THE Daily Crossword by Don Johnson



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1. Cherry 2. Lowest point 3. Arrow point 4. Author Paton 5. Bandstand 6. 12-point type 7. Hottest Larry 8. Sulfates 9. City ways 10. Fears 11. Country bumpkins 12. Put forward as 13. British county 14. Greek letter 15. Embankment 16. Knockout count 17. Authoritative commands 18. Sea bold enough 19. Kind of desert region 20. More lustrous 21. San Diego's state: abbr. 22. Slaughter 23. Position 24. Enzyme: suff. 25. Pierre's income 26. Lay an — (tail) 27. Mail 28. Strike out a syllable 29. Short alert 30. Driving dinges 31. Track 32. Customers 33. Tour movie 34. "What's a — for me?" 35. Roof edge 36. Pass a law 37. Bank (on) 38. Jones 39. Chores 40. First name in mysteries 41. Testing places 42. Came down 43. Foolish behavior 44. Make beloved 45. Salmendons 46. Clavours 47. Stamping block 48. Kind 49. White 50. Revised, in a way 51. Bakery offering 52. "God's Little" 53. Talk back 54. Singer Diamond 55. Fencing swords 56. Stun 57. Clambake, e.g. 58. — clear of (avoid) 59. Ruff city 60. Stained 61. Tourist 62. Wipe out 63. Certain 64. Sherman 65. Underworld god 66. Dry, as wine 67. Foolish behavior 68. Has a session 69. Make beloved 70. Flocks cargo 71. Slightly 72. Robert 73. Complete 74. Key 75. Has a session 76. Aged state 77. Implore 78. Bluster 79. Color 80. Streamlet 81. Eye sore? 82. Our — limb 83. Talk nonsense

هكذا من الامم

Libya said to have bought into German petrol station chain

The Royal Dutch/Shell Group,
which pulled out its one-third

Investment in each of the new refineries would be between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion, they said. They were expected to start production by 1997 and reach full capacity three years later.

lose specific financial arrangements for the five-year agreement but said it would entail creating a trust fund for Comex earnings, currently estimated at \$5 million a year. Comex has no debt and \$18 million in cash assets, Mr. Arthur said.

In Japan, China's market share had surged to about 6.8 per cent over the past five years while Taiwan's had remained below five per cent.

said at a news conference here.

"We always used to keep our gold reserves a closely guarded secret," he told the conservative *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. "That was our most cherished secret, which the IMF and Western banks were always dying to find out."

"Whatever our (real) financial position, we were considered a borrower of the first Category on the financial market," he said. "We used to attract huge sums of credits."

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| One U.S. dollar | 1.2644/49 1.6310/20 1.8335/45 1.5102/12 33.50/54 5.5130/80 1508/1513 124.62/67 7.3700/3800 6.2975/3075 6.2750/2850 | Canadian dollar Dutchmarks Dutch guilders Swiss francs Belgian francs French francs Italian lire Japanese yen Swedish crowns Norwegian crowns Danish crowns |
| One sterling | 1.4615/25 | |
| One ounce of gold | \$329.30/329.70 | |

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(Except Gold)

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| <p>Cinema Tel: 677420</p> <p>CONCORD</p> <p>Kevin Costner and Whitney Houston</p> <p>BODYGUARD</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>Free Car Parking</p> | <p>Cinema Tel: 634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA</p> <p>Danny Glover — in</p> <p>FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>THE BUGS BUNNY</p> |
| <p>Tel: 675571</p> <p>Nabil Al Mashini Theatre</p> <p>Tuesday January 5th marks the opening of the new theatre season presenting:</p> <p>Pandemonium (Ta'a wa Qaimah)</p> <p>Daily at 8:30 p.m.</p> <p>Tickets office open all day</p> | <p>Tel: 625155</p> <p>AHLAN THEATRE</p> <p>Nabil & Hisham Theatre</p> <p>Daily presents at 8:30 p.m. (except Saturdays and Sundays).</p> <p>Extra show Thursdays at 4:30 p.m.</p> <p>"Welcome New World Order Play/93"</p> <p>In a new form.</p> <p>Box office opens daily for booking and reservation.</p> |



An injured civilian is lifted into a van after a shell lands outside Sarajevo's presidency. At least eight people were killed and several

injured, according to Sarajevo Radio. Sarajevo came under heavy bombardment as peace talks in Geneva collapsed (AFP Photo)

Yugoslavia warns of possible army action against Croatia

BELGRADE (R) — Yugoslavia said Tuesday that it could be drawn into open conflict with neighbouring Croatia if the republic persisted in its attack on the Serb-held Krajina enclave.

Foreign Minister Ilija Djukic said in a letter to the U.N. Security Council that Yugoslavia had an obligation and right to protect Serbs in U.N. protected areas in Croatia.

Meanwhile, a major power dam recaptured by Croatian troops from Serb rebels who blew it up, threatening nearby villages with a tidal wave, will have to be rebuilt, European Community (EC) monitors said Tuesday.

EC observers stationed in Croatia's Krajina enclave said the damage inflicted on Peruca Dam was one of the worst consequences of a Croatian offensive into the region, held by Serb rebels since 1990.

Fighting in Krajina abated Tuesday after artillery and small arms battles in the Zadar theatre Monday which each side accused the other of starting.

Henrik Kil, spokesman for the 350-member EC Monitoring Mission (ECMM) in the former Yugoslavia's civil war zones, said Croatian and British engineers had written off the 65-metre (215-foot) high Peruca barrage after inspecting it.

"A great deal of the clay core has been eroded. Engineers have concluded the dam cannot come into function again the way it is now. It must be torn down and built again with the same materials," he told a news conference in the Croatian capital.

Serb forces in a withdrawn to heights some three kilometres north of Peruca but could still hit the hydroelectric barrage with artillery, Mr. Kil said.

Croatian troops retook Peruca last Thursday, a week after pushing across a year-old ceasefire line into the fringes of Krajina in frustration at futile U.N. efforts to disarm Serb rebels and restore the enclave to Zagreb's sovereignty.

But three mines laid along Peruca's base were detonated as the Serbs withdrew, rupturing the dam which restrains a 25 kilometre long lake.

Croatian workers averted immediate disaster by starting a controlled drainage, but escaping waters have swelled the Cetina River, which flows down from the dam, over its banks and flooded fertile fields in a valley of 20,000 people.

No casualties or serious damage have been reported but Croatian crews were still racing against time to empty the dam before its stricken walls gave way.

The dam was a key objective of the Croatian push into Krajina because it provided the bulk of electricity for Croatia's Dalmatian coast in its beyday as a Western tourist centre, before the Krajina Serb rebellion.

But Zagreb's goal of a Dalmatian with a restored power supply that would bring the tourists back now seems a long way off.

Fighting erupted in Krajina, a mountainous region skirting the Adriatic seacoast and inhabited mostly by Serbs, on Jan. 22 after a year-long U.N.-brokered truce that ended Croatia's independence war with Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia.

Mr. Kil said that both Serb rebels and Croatian government troops seized heavy weaponry from U.N. or EC depots, handed over as part of the January 1992 truce accord, shortly after the fighting flared.

Klaus Lawes, the ECMM's deputy director of operations, said at three depots in Karlovac, just outside northern Krajina, Croatian soldiers had seized 10 T-55 tanks and other hardware.

Zagreb has said its Krajina strike is meant to recoup only a few strategic targets like Peruca, but Serbs had mounted counterattacks and resumed expulsions of Croat civilians.

Krajina Serb leaders Monday reported a multi-pronged Croatian offensive into the enclave's heart. Volunteer fighters from Serbia proper have flocked to Krajina to help.

Asked about the conflicting reports, Mr. Lawes said: "I think there are Serb counter-attacks to get back lost territory and that's why the fighting is continuing at the moment."

Neighbouring Bosnia's parallel civil war was reported generally quiet, but a funeral procession in the Serb-besieged capital of Sarajevo was shelled Tuesday, killing one mourner and wounding 13 others.

U.N. convoy shelled, 1 killed

A United Nations humanitarian relief convoy was shelled in southwest Bosnia Tuesday and one person was killed, a U.N. spokesman said.

He said another member of the convoy was seriously wounded by the artillery barrage near Croatia-held Mostar.

Croatian radio and military spokesmen blamed the attack on Serb irregulars entrenched in mountains overlooking the main relief supply route between Mostar and the Serb-besieged Bosnian capital Sarajevo.

There was no immediate confirmation of their charge.

Mediator David Owen called Tuesday for U.S. support for an international peace plan for Bosnia, but said Secretary of State Warren Christopher was cagey about whether Washington would send troops to back the plan.

Speaking on the "CBS This Morning" news programme, Lord Owen said Washington's backing for the peace plan drawn up in Geneva was essential if the Bosnian Muslims were to accept it.

"The Americans are crucial because at the moment I think the Muslim government of President (Alija) Izetbegovic is holding back because they hope the Americans might lift the (arms) embargo or might come in with American GIs to help them fight, or intervene in some sense and I think this is stalling our negotiations," Lord Owen said on the news programme.

Mediators Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, who met Mr. Christopher Monday at the United Nations in New York, have urged the United States to provide what Lord Owen says would be credibility and essential support at a critical time.

PHNOM PENH (R) — United Nations peacekeepers in Cambodia insisted Tuesday that the Phnom Penh government put on trial one of its policemen and a Khmer Rouge guerrilla, both accused of murder.

A Phnom Penh court last week refused to hear a case against the Khmer Rouge soldier, whom the U.N. prosecutor says has confessed to mass murder. The U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) accused the Justice Ministry of deliberately obstructing the case.

Phnom Penh says UNTAC has not followed proper procedure in this case or that of the policeman, Em Chan, who is due to appear in court Wednesday after being remanded for two weeks.

Em Chan is accused of murdering an official of the popular royalist opposition party. The U.N. prosecutor says the Khmer Rouge soldier has confessed to taking part in the murder of 15 civilians — most of them ethnic Vietnamese — in central Cambodia on Dec. 27.

U.N. officials privately say they believe the government is worried about the consequences of trying one of its men and is therefore obstructing the other trial, despite the Khmer Rouge being its arch-enemy.

UNTAC chief Yasushi Akashi was to meet Prime Minister Hun Sen to try and resolve the problem.

UNTAC spokesman Eric Berman told a news conference on Tuesday it was "clearly unacceptable" that the government was obstructing the trials. "Numerous legal methods are being reviewed as to how to resolve the situation," he said.

These included adjustments to a directive issued by Mr. Akashi to bring in a special investigator to prosecute cases of political violence.

Meanwhile Japan Tuesday expressed concern about the safety of its peacekeeping troops in Cambodia and ruled out sending another such force to war-torn Somalia.

Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and his spokesman said they were worried that Japan's 600

army engineers now in Cambodia might be caught in the latest crossfire between Phnom Penh government troops and Khmer Rouge guerrillas.

"The Japanese government is deeply concerned about the increase in military tension (in Cambodia)," Mr. Miyazawa's spokesman Yohel Kono told a news conference.

But Mr. Miyazawa said he was not ordering a withdrawal.

Parliament last year passed a law allowing troops to serve overseas for the first time since world war II. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) agreed on a compromise with centrists that the troops not be allowed to go to a war zone or act as a buffer to separate warring factions.

In a separate development, the Cambodian government said Tuesday it had attacked Khmer Rouge positions in the largest offensive since the U.N. operation began in Cambodia to enlarge the electorate for the upcoming election.

The Khmer Rouge has said it will boycott the May poll

NEW YORK (R) — Hillary Clinton says she wants to open up the White House to all Americans, return broccoli to the executive mansion menu and ban smoking from its premises, the New York Times reported. In her first interview since the inauguration, Mrs. Clinton agreed to speak to the New York Times last Friday only about her role as first lady and not about her professional responsibilities. She told the newspaper that in addition to prohibiting smoking entirely in the White House, she and President Clinton wanted to encourage people to feel more a part of government by occasionally opening the executive mansion to the public. She said there might be more open houses like the one held the day after the inauguration on Jan. 20, as well as day-long meetings to which ordinary Americans would be invited and events involving children and families. Mrs. Clinton said the White House kitchen would focus on American food rather than a French-style menu, and restaurant chefs would be consulted about menus.

Even the watchdogs are watched in Switzerland

DAVOS, Switzerland (R) — Security at the World Economy Forum, a meeting of business and political leaders at this Swiss Alpine resort, is so strict that even a watchdog has to wear an identity badge. With typical Swiss thoroughness, Valentina von Madlain, an eight-year-old aide-de-camp, has an identity badge complete with photo dangling from her collar as she patrols the Congress Centre every evening. Like many delegates to the prestigious forum, Valentina is at the top of her profession, having guarded celebrities such as multimillionaire Christina Onassis in the past. But she has only graduated from the first of the three grades of the Swiss watchdog training scheme, after losing one of her fangs during an exercise.

And now from South Africa — easy-peel oranges

DURBAN (R) — Sticky fingers and the frustration of grappling with stubborn peel are a thing of the past for Orange eaters in South Africa. A Natal province company has created an orange it says is as easy to peel as a tangerine. "Down the line it will be the way citrus will be eaten," Highbate Farms Marketing Director Bill Beghin said Monday. The easy-peel orange has been on the South African market for two months and consumers seem to like it, Mr. Beghin said. He hopes it will give a boost to the citrus industry by enticing people to eat more oranges. The process, developed in the United States, uses an enzyme in the orange skin to get rid of the pith. The Highbate operation is the first outside the United States to develop such an orange and the company is aiming at the export market next season, Mr. Beghin said.

Nikon develops tiny 35mm camera

TOKYO (R) — Japanese camera maker Nikon Corp will start selling a 35mm auto-focus camera that it says is the world's smallest and lightest. The company unveiled Monday the "Nikon Mini" which weighs 155 g (5.4 oz) and is 10.80 cm long, 6.20 cm high and 3.2 cm thick (4.2 by 2.4 by 1.2 in) — about the size of a wallet. It will go on sale next month at 37,000 yen (\$295), the company said.

Japan gangsters rape, then tattoo teenage runaway

OSAKA, Japan (R) — Japanese police have arrested two "Yakuza" mobsters they allege abducted and raped a 14-year-old girl and then tattooed her so she would not try to escape. Police in the western city of Osaka said that Masakazu Noborizaka, 47, leader of a group affiliated with the Yamaguchi-Gumi, Japan's largest crime syndicate, and accomplice Masaru Sato, 24, kidnapped the teenage runaway last October. After sexually abusing her for two months, the pair tattooed a cherry blossom on her forearm, police said. Tattoos on Japanese are considered the hallmark of Yakuza. Those tattooed, especially women, would be ostracised by non-criminal society. The girl was eventually rescued when police found her in an Osaka shopping mall in December, police added.

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Armenian president sacks premier

YEREVAN (R) — Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan announced Tuesday he was sacking his prime minister in a dispute over the future of the country's collapsed economy.

Mr. Ter-Petrosyan also announced he would dissolve the government and announce a replacement cabinet within a week.

"Today I will sign a decree on the resignation of the prime minister and his cabinet," Mr. Ter-Petrosyan told parliament.

The premier's dismissal came at a time of acute economic crisis in Armenia, a landlocked former Soviet republic starved of fuel and caught in an economically draining war over territory with neighbouring Azerbaijan.

Mr. Ter-Petrosyan said Prime Minister Khosrov Arutunyan had announced his intention of quitting at a meeting of the country's Security Council late Monday.

Parliament had been discussing a programme for economic development and a budget for 1993 presented by the government. But Mr. Arutunyan told parliament Monday evening that he had decided he could not accept certain parts of the programme.

Mr. Ter-Petrosyan said the prime minister's behaviour had been totally unacceptable.

"What he did was a gross abuse of etiquette and I took this to be a sign of his resignation," the president told journalists.

He said Mr. Arutunyan had proved incapable of putting into action a clear economic programme during his six months as premier.

Of all former Soviet republics, Armenia faces that most crippling economic problems, with gas and electricity supplies cut back to a minimum. Homes are unheated and hot water has been cut off for

months or even years in some cases.

Hundreds of factories have shut down production for want of fuel and raw materials.

Gas supplies were cut off completely last week when a pipeline running through Georgia was blown up. Georgian authorities have set up a temporary link to pump gas into the neighbouring Transcaucasian republic.

But conditions in the capital, Yerevan, remain chaotic with power supplies sporadic and transport virtually at a halt. Train links have also been cut.

For five years Armenia and Azerbaijan have been looked in conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh — an Armenian territory nominally under the control of Baku.

Armenian forces in Karabakh are fighting for independence from Azerbaijan. The dispute has spilled over into fighting around Armenia's borders.

Magazine apologises to Major, caterer for publishing rumours

LONDON (AP) — A respected left-wing magazine apologised to Prime Minister John Major and a caterer Monday for publishing rumours, which it did not suggest were true, that they had an extramarital affair.

Mr. Major and Clare Latimer, who are married, filed lawsuits against the New Statesman and Society and the satirical magazine Scallywag for reporting on the affair.

The New Statesman and Society's editors "very much regret that the prime minister and his family have been caused any personal distress by the publication of the article," said a letter from their lawyers Bindman and Partners.

"Our clients are very anxious that the totally unblemished personal reputations of the prime minister and Ms. Latimer should be clearly and promptly vindicated," it said.

The letter said, however, that the magazine does not accept that the article was defamatory to Mr. Major or Ms. Latimer.

Downing Street referred calls to Mr. Major's lawyers, Biddle and Co., who had no immediate comment.

In announcing his lawsuits Thursday, Mr. Major denounced the allegations in the New Statesman and in Scallywag as "completely untrue."

Mr. Major married his wife, Norma, in 1970. They have a son and a daughter.

Simon Regan, editor and publisher of Scallywag, said last week he was confident of winning and that there was "worse to come."

But the New Statesman and Society expressed dismay, saying its report had merely exposed a "smear" and never had suggested it was true.

Scallywag suggests a romance between Ms. Latimer, 41, and Mr. Major in early January in an article headlined "rude feasts at

U.S. Navy planners reportedly propose cutting 125,000 personnel

SAN DIEGO (Agencies) — Navy planners have proposed cutting 125,000 personnel from the service and eliminating 140 warships and scores of older aircraft by 1999, a newspaper reported Monday.

The cuts, contained in a six-year budget plan called "recapitalising the navy," would leave the navy with about 375,000 uniformed personnel and about 320 warships, including 12 aircraft carriers, the San Diego Union-Tribune reported.

The newspaper did not identify its sources for the report.

The navy has refused to comment on the plan.

The Union-Tribune said the personnel cuts would be in addition to those in a plan adopted under the Bush administration that will cut navy personnel from about 585,000 people last year to 500,000 by 1997.

Such cuts in manpower and equipment would take the navy down to pre-cold war levels and save billions of dollars, said Lawrence Korb, an assistant secretary of defence for manpower in the Reagan administration.

"Manpower is your biggest part of the budget," he said. "You're talking big backs, \$5 billion a year, every year," just from the personnel cuts. Mr. Korb, a former naval aviator who now works for the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based research centre.

Meanwhile, President Bill Clinton Monday tried to refocus American attention on the top priorities of his new administration — rebuilding the U.S. economy and reforming a teetering health care system.

Shaking off a week of pounding over his support of the right of homosexuals to serve in the military, he said he would make a first step towards health care reform by giving the states greater leeway in running medical programmes.

A former state governor himself, Mr. Clinton ordered a series of steps to make it easier for governors to cut through federal red tape 90 they can search for more efficient, less costly ways of providing care to the poor.

Health insurance for those who can't afford to pay for private insurance is administered by states but partially funded and regulated by Washington.

After a two-hour White House meeting with his one-time colleagues, the president said the governors agreed to help him fulfil his campaign promise to come up with a new national health care system for all Americans.

He said he hoped his administration, working with the states, could conquer "the twin monsters of spiralling health care costs, and the agony of having no access to health care, no health care coverage or living in fear of losing it."

A White House task force headed by the president's wife, Hillary Rodham Clinton, is working on a reform programme to be completed by early May.

The governors will work with the task force, and South Carolina

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Dos Santos: Angola will pursue truce

LUANDA (R) — Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos has vowed his government would not give up trying to reach a ceasefire with UNITA rebels but said his country's renewed civil war might last a very long time. He regretted that talks in Addis Ababa at the weekend had failed to yield a truce and said the government would seek to revive 1991 peace accords in a round planned for Feb. 10. "If there is no ceasefire in the second round certainly there would be efforts to reach one in the third. If it's not reached in the third, then in the fourth," he told Reuters in an interview at his Luanda residence. "One day there will be a ceasefire in Angola. We do not believe in a military solution. Everything must be resolved by dialogue," he said. Mr. Dos Santos's remarks contradicted those of a negotiator, General Higinio Carneiro, who said at the weekend the government would not attend a second round if UNITA to guarantee it was ready for a truce.

Inkatha vows not to rejoin CODESA

JOHANNESBURG (R) — The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) will not join any negotiating forum similar to the Confederation for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) which collapsed in January last year, the Zulu-based IFP said. "There is no question whatsoever of the Inkatha Freedom Party ever returning to any forum which in any way resembles CODESA and we very much doubt that any party not previously represented there would do so either," the IFP said. The IFP was reacting to comments by African National Congress (ANC) executive member Thabo Mbeki, who said CODESA would be reconvened and participants would include the radical black Pan Africanist Congress and the white right-wing Conservative Party. A preparatory conference leading to resumed multi-party democracy talks on the end of white rule in South Africa is due to be held later this month or in early March. CODESA was suspended in May last year and collapsed a month later when the ANC pulled out of democracy talks with the government in protest at the Boipatong township massacre of at least 43 blacks.

Slovaks give jewellery to help government

BRATISLAVA (R) — Thousands of Slovaks are handing over gold, jewels and cash to help the new country's ailing economy. The government-supported fund-raising drive was kicked off with a gala at the Slovak National Theatre, where citizens formed long queues to make donations. Collection stalls set up in the lobby reported receiving 113 pieces of jewellery and 335,000 crowns (\$12,000) within hours. Officials said a Slovak-American named as J.V. Kasanicki, head of a Virginia-based company, wrote a cheque for \$500,000 to the national treasury. A Slovak-German contributed 500,000 marks (\$307,000). Slovak Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar and parliament Speaker Ivan Gasparovic each contributed 15,000 crowns (\$535). "I am very pleased that this collection has started with such gusto," Deputy Premier Jozef Prokes said after the gala. "This is a collection by citizens, not the state," said Jozef Markus, chairman of the Matice Slovenska Cultural Institution which organised the drive. "Our aim is to help Slovakia and it is not selfish. We want Slovakia to be equal to

other nations."

Hong Kong governor to enter hospital

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten is to enter hospital for heart treatment just as his drive for democratic reform enters a crucial stage. Spokesman Mike Hanson said Tuesday that 48-year-old Patten, who has been under remorseless attack from China for his reform proposals, would go into hospital Wednesday for treatment under local anaesthetic. "Tests over recent weeks have revealed that although Mr. Patten's heart is functioning normally there has been narrowing of two of his coronary arteries," he said in a statement. "It is expected that Mr. Patten will be in hospital for up to four days and will then need around a week to 10 days' convalescence before returning to work. He will be receiving no visitors over this period."

Floods kill 18 in Indonesia

JAKARTA (R) — Floods have killed 18 people in central Java, Indonesia's most populous island and the country's rice bowl, and forced more than 100,000 people to flee their homes, a provincial spokesman said Tuesday. Speaking by phone from the city of Semarang he said about 105,000 people had been evacuated but fewer than 300 houses had been damaged. A week of monsoon rains had destroyed 5,160 hectares (12,750 acres) of rice paddy and a number of bridges. "Some people have already returned home and the rest are still waiting for the water levels to drop. The weather is better today," he said.

17 killed in Pakistan tribal clash

ISLAMABAD (R) — Two tribes in northwestern Pakistan battled with rockets and mortars to settle an ancient land dispute, killing 17 people and injuring 21, a government official said Monday. The Khoedad Khel and Watezai tribes at Sadda village in the Kurram Agency bordering Afghanistan also used automatic weapons Sunday in the latest bout of a 200-year-old dispute, assistant political agent Abdul Ghaffar told Reuters by telephone. Each tribe lays claim to a piece of land controlled by the Khoedad Khel, Mr. Ghaffar said. "The have fought several such bloody battles in the past." A temporary ceasefire was arranged by a local senator who was trying to resolve the issue through a tribal council, he said. The Watezais have refused to accept compensation money as agreed earlier and were now demanding control of the land, Mr. Ghaffar said.

Tanzanian floods toll reaches 40

DAR ES SALAAM (R) — At least 40 people were killed and others were missing after their homes were swept away by floods in northeastern Tanzania, an official said Monday. Regional administrator Shaban Suleiman Muyombo said by telephone rescue teams had found seven more bodies in addition to the 33 recovered in the Lush